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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

Clergy and Churchwardens of the Diocese of Peterborough,

AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION,

OCTOBER, 1872,

BY

WILLIAM CONNOR MAGEE, D.D.,

BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

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A CHARGE,

&c.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,

THE anxious sense of responsibility under which a Bishop proceeds to deliver his primary Charge, is lightened for me by the reflection that we do not meet as strangers. That we might not so meet I have delayed this, my first visitation, until the latest possible moment. I felt that, before attempting to speak to you those words of exhortation or counsel, which you expect to hear on such an occasion, I ought first to acquaint myself thoroughly with the circumstances of the Diocese over which, in God's providence, I have been called to preside. I ought to know, not merely from the study of Diocesan returns and reports; but with the personal knowledge that could only come from over-seeing and sharing in your labours, what were the special conditions under which you are called to exercise your Ministry—what were your special helps and hindrances—what things amongst us specially needed to be strengthened or set in order—what to be amended or restrained.

I wished, moreover, to win for my words such acceptance with you as might come from your conviction, that I had, at least, honestly striven to attain this knowledge of yourselves and of your work. I wished that, when I should speak to you of the high aims and awful responsibilities of your office, I might speak as one who you knew had learned as your fellow labourer, something too of its trials and its difficulties; and, that, when I should speak to you of any aims or plans of mine as regards my own work amongst you, I might speak, not as one who was producing untested theories which better acquaintance with the Diocese might correct or refute; but as one whose

aims had, by your help, been not only tested, but even in some measure successfully wrought out.

I am thankful to know that in one respect, at least, these expectations have been more than realised. Whatever may have been my shortcomings, in fulfilling amongst you even my own ideal of the office and work of a Bishop, I have found, on your part, no lack of help towards accomplishing it. All the aid and encouragement that the kindest and most trustful of welcomes, the heartiest and most loyal co-operation in work and in council could give, I have received at the hands both of the Clergy and of the Laity of this Diocese, from the hour when first I entered it a stranger to almost every one in it, until this moment when I can look around me and find in every part of it those whom I have learned to esteem very highly in love for their works sake, and for the help and encouragement that they have given me in mine.

And I am bound to acknowledge, as I do most thankfully, that this co-operation has been rendered me alike by Clergy and Laity of all Church parties amongst us. In all attempts that I have as yet made to draw you together in any common work for the Church in this Diocese, it has been my happiness to find myself surrounded by earnest and devoted men of all schools of thought in our Church, who have shewn, and who may even have more deeply learned by such united efforts, that within the broad limits that our Church has traced for her children, if there be ample room for divergence, there is even ampler room for loving and brotherly co-operation. To be the centre of all such united and uniting labours; to draw together more and more the severed ranks of those who, spite of all their differences, are still fellow soldiers and fellow servants of the same Lord, is one of the greatest privileges, as it should be one of the most earnest aims of a Bishop. But how far he shall succeed in so doing depends quite as much upon his Clergy as upon himself. It rests with you, my Rev. Brethren, perhaps even more than with me, to say how far this Diocese shall find in its Bishop, not merely the legal overseer of so many individual Clergymen, but the leader of a united band of Brethren.

The fact that we have thus worked together for nearly four years warrants my laying before you, with some confidence, my impressions as to the state of Church life and work in this Diocese.

That the experience of these four years should have impressed me with a painful sense of how much yet needs to be done, how much there is, not even yet attempted, how far beyond anything we have yet attained to is the true standard of our life and work, is only what all earnest work for God must teach us one and all. Nevertheless I should be unjust alike to you and to those who

have preceded me in my office here, if I were not to say that I am quite as deeply impressed, not only with the sense of how much has been and is being done amongst you, but of how great are our powers and opportunities for effecting all that yet remains to be done.

Here, as everywhere else, the Church is to be seen, aroused from the cold lethargy of the last century, girding herself resolutely and penitently to her two-fold task; the redeeming, so far as may be, the arrears of a too slothful past; the providing for the urgent needs of the present. Tied and bound as she has been, and still in large measure is, by that weighty chain of cause and effect which links old sins and neglects with present difficulties and dangers; the pitifulness of God's great mercy is visibly loosing her, is filling her once more with an ever deepening sense of the greatness of her mission and with strength to accomplish it. Zeal and devotion are fast replacing sloth and formalism. The Ministry of Christ's Church is more and more felt to be, what its name implies, service, the most honourable and yet the most laborious of all services, wherein they who labour are the servants of men for Christ's sake. The Parish is regarded no longer as a mere living, a Beneficium, yielding certain assured profits to its fortunate possessor with the condition attached of certain light routine duties which may be done by a hired and ill-paid deputy. It is more and more felt to be a trust, the most solemn and awful of all trusts, even "the cure and government of the souls" of men, of which account must be given in the great day of judgment. The Church is no longer the profession into which the Clergy enter at their ordination, but the fellowship and communion of the faithful, into which Laity and Clergy alike enter at their Baptism, and in which they have each their respective rights and their respective duties too. Under the influence of convictions such as these, the abuses of the past are rapidly vanishing. The pluralists, the sinecurists, the absentee parsons are becoming things of the past, and those who succeed these are, for the most part, conscientious and diligent pastors, who are setting themselves, with care and pains, to build up again the waste places left them by their predecessors.

I do not say, would that I could say, that this is the case in every Parish in this Diocese; that we have not our share of relics of the past; that we have no neglected parishes, no slothful nor incompetent Pastors. There are such. There are parishes amongst us which are the disgrace of the Diocese, and the despair of the Bishop: clergymen who neither do their duty nor allow any one else to do it for them; who strain to the utmost those legal rights of our Parochial system which were designed to protect the Clergyman *in* his work, and not *from* it, and who contrive by virtue of these to make, in spite of Parishioners or Bishop, their Parishes very Gideons' fleeces, dry as summer dust, while all around them may

be watered with the dews of reviving life. There are such to be seen amongst us ; just as on the other hand, there are to be seen amongst the Laity, patrons who still regard the preferment they possess not as a trust to provide a fitting Pastor for immortal souls, but as a marketable piece of property to be sold to the highest bidder, or bestowed on their nearest or neediest relative. Nevertheless I can honestly testify that these are the exceptions not the rule, that they are reprobated by the general conscience of the Diocese and are passing away with the passing generation. The standard, both of zeal and efficiency, on the part of the Clergy, even their enemies being judges, and the standard of conscientious responsibility on the part of Patrons, probably never stood higher than it does now ; and this has been, and could only have been, thus raised, by the higher aims and more earnest efforts of the Clergy themselves.

And it is another token for good, that this higher standard of Clerical life and work is not only to be seen in our large towns, where the quickened tide of all public life, the rivalry of the sects, the full blaze of publicity both for encouragement and for criticism, the sympathy and counsel of many fellow labourers, and above all the crying needs of the masses are ever stimulating the Clergy to greater efforts ; but in the small country parishes with which this Diocese abounds, where the Pastor leads, under all the depressing influences of a contracted sphere of work, a scanty population, a poor and illiterate congregation, the comparatively obscure and uneventful life of a Country Parson. Here, where the temptations to indolence or despondency are strongest, are to be found, as I well know, some of the brightest and happiest instances of diligent and successful Pastoral work.

More encouraging, however, even than the sight of such labours as these, is the marked and even rapid success which in so many instances seems to attend them. Few things have struck me more, during the four years in which I have watched the work of this Diocese, than the power which one devoted Parish Priest, throwing himself heartily into the Parochial system of our Church, possesses for the renovation of his Parish. In more than one instance have I been permitted to see the remarkable change which passes over some long neglected Parish, when once the people have come to recognize in their new Pastor one who really cares for their souls. How soon, in such a case, are those who have been alienated by indifference won back by love. How soon do the restored Church, the frequent and hearty Services, house to house visitation, earnest and faithful (it need not be able or eloquent) preaching, coming from the heart of the preacher and going straight to the heart of the hearer, gather back the scattered flock that had forsaken the

Church of their fathers, only because She seemed to have forsaken them. Great, indeed, for good or for evil, is the power possessed by the English Parish Priest. It may be doubted whether there is at this moment any thing at all comparable to it in Christendom. Certainly there is nothing like it in our own country. No Priesthood, no Ministry amongst us possesses anything like the same opportunities for good, the same real influence with all classes, as that which belongs to the Clergy of our Church if they will but use it as they might.

How far we, in this Diocese, are rightly using the powers and opportunities which are still ours, we may ascertain for ourselves by certain practical tests, to which I now proceed to invite your attention.

And first, and most obvious of these, is the extent to which the Beneficed Clergy are resident on their cures. A non-resident Incumbent is a contradiction in terms. An Incumbent is one "*Qui incumbit operi*," who gives himself to the work of his Ministry; and that work is one which no Pastor can perform by deputy. To him, and not to any other, is entrusted the cure of souls in his Parish, with all of Pastoral care, of personal watchfulness and diligence which these awful words imply. The income arising from his Benefice is in no sense his property, it is the Spiritual Trust Fund of the Parish, in which he has only a life interest, conditioned on his performance of all the duties of the Trust. To take, therefore, the greater part of this income, and entirely to absent himself from the performance of these duties, is a breach of trust, which is not in the least condoned by his providing out of the remainder of the fund for a Curate, who cannot be to the Parishioners all that the Incumbent ought to be, and who, if he could, ought to receive all the income arising from the Trust Fund.

Residence of
the Clergy.

On this point there is happily very little to be desired amongst us. The number of Clergy, in this Diocese, non-resident and not performing their duty, either from ill-health or any other cause, amounts only to 33. Of these 10 are exempt from residence under the provisions of the Pluralities Act; having been inducted before the year 1836. One only, I am thankful to say, is absent by reason of sequestration; and the remaining 22 are absent, by license from myself, mostly on account of ill-health.

On this latter reason for absence I wish to say a few words, which will not, I trust, be taken amiss.

The law of our Church permits to the Incumbent, in addition to the three months' absence to which he is entitled without license, such other temporary absence with license, for good and sufficient cause, as should in reason be granted to the members of any public service; but neither the law of our Church, nor the moral obligations of the case permit of permanent absence on the score of ill-health. The bodily infirmity of an Incumbent, which unfits

him for the more active duties of his Parish, does not necessarily unfit him for guiding and governing, as he often most usefully can, his Curates and his Parishioners. If, on the other hand, the state of his health be such as to require permanent residence in some other locality, or if he feel that the time has come when even the superintendence of his Parish might better be intrusted to younger and more vigorous hands; the law now permits of what, until lately, was impossible, his retiring upon a pension.

The principle of this law is manifestly a just one. It is simply that principle which happily is more and more influencing our Church legislation, namely, that a living, like every other public office, is not a freehold but a trust, held only on condition of the discharge of important duties; that, accordingly, considerations of the efficiency of the service, that is to say of the interests involved in the trusts, must outweigh those of the individual; and that, therefore, for Incumbents or for Bishops, just as for the Officer or the Civil Servant, there should be the alternative of efficient performance of duty, or just and considerate superannuation. Whether the terms of this retirement for Clergymen are sufficiently just and considerate; whether, for instance, in the case of small Incumbencies, the retiring pension should not be one-half instead of one-third of the whole income; whether, in every instance, the retiring Incumbent should be required to forsake the house endeared to him by the memories of long years of residence, are questions deserving of serious consideration. As is also the question how this superannuation may be supplemented in the cases, and they are many, of livings too small to provide both a sufficient pension for the retiring Clergyman and a sufficient income for his successor. Such cases, in my opinion, ought to be met by a Parochial, or better still, by a Diocesan Superannuation Fund. Certainly, until some such provision be forthcoming, the Act should not be made, as some have proposed to make it, compulsory. I cannot but hope, however, that now that the principle of retirement is established as against the Incumbent and in favour of the Parishioners, they will on their part recognise the corresponding principle of Lay provision for superannuation; or, in other words, that wherever the original Spiritual Trust Fund of a Parish is clearly insufficient to provide a retiring pension, it may be supplemented from the same source from which the fund itself originally came—the gifts of the faithful Laity.

Superannua-
tion Fund.

Church Res-
toration.

Next to the residence of the Clergy, the condition of their Churches may be regarded as a fair test of the state of Church life in any Diocese. As are the worshippers, such as a rule will be the place in which they worship. The parish Church in half ruinous decay, the Church-yard neglected and filthy, tell their own tale of a corresponding neglect and spiritual decay of Pastor or people, or of both. There can be but little fear of God, or love

for His service, where His House is the worst cared for in the Parish. Or, again, the Church—not in a state of decay, but in a state of most solid and irreverent comfort, hideous with square pews, where selfish respectability ensconces itself and thrusts God's poor into remote and dark corners; the Church where the Holy Table, duly provided with lolling cushions for the elbows of the infrequent celebrant, is hidden from the eyes of the congregation by a towering pile of carpentry, which lifts into prominence the person of the Minister who preaches his part of the prayers to the people, and that of the Clerk who says their part instead of them—tells its tale of worshippers, whose highest idea of worship is that of their own edification, and for whom their place of worship is, therefore, not so much God's House, to be made beautiful in His honour, as Man's House, to be made respectable for his credit and comfortable for his convenience. But the Church—cleansed of these irreverent and selfish disfigurements; restored to the original beauty of a design conceived when men built Churches, not for man's convenience, but for God's glory; free, from porch to Holy Table, for rich and poor alike; adorned with the loving, nay, the lavish gifts of devout and loving hearts—tells its tale likewise. It tells us of worshippers who are being taught, were it only by the mute witness of the place where they assemble, what the true worship of the Sanctuary is; that it is something more than the hearing of prayers and sermons, something more even than real prayer and praise; that it is the assembling of Christ's people, to win by such gathering in His name His promised presence in their midst: a presence which makes the place where it is vouchsafed, the House of God, the Holy House which they who own that presence love to make beautiful, as the place wherein His honour dwells.

Judged by this test we have much to be thankful for. You know how largely and how rapidly the work of Church Restoration has progressed in this Diocese. Begun within the memory of many now living, it has spread all over a Diocese in which the number of large and beautiful Churches is so great as to make Church Restoration at once most extensive and most costly; and in which, nevertheless, the greater number of our Churches have been admirably restored, and that, too, in cases where the paucity or the poverty of the parishioners, and the absence of any resident squire, must have made the work, at first, appear almost hopeless. Too much praise cannot be given to those who, in spite of such local difficulties, have brought, as so many have brought, their Church Restoration to a successful issue.

The total number of Churches restored or rebuilt, since the date of my Consecration, has been 82, at a cost of voluntary contributions, as nearly as I can ascertain, of £109,000. *

Of Church Building, as distinguished from Church Restoration,

Church
Building.

* See Note (A.)

there is not so much to be said, in a Diocese in which there are few of those great and growing centres of population which so overtax the energies of the Church in other parts of the country. Only in three of our towns, Leicester, Northampton, and Wellingborough, is there at this moment any very pressing need for new Churches. In Leicester, with its population of nearly 100,000 souls, the need has been sorely felt. It is, however, I am happy to say, being to a great degree overtaken. Within the last 10 years, during which the population of Leicester has increased from 69,000 to very nearly 100,000, four new Churches have been built and districts attached to them, and a fifth will soon be completed. One of these, the beautiful Church of S. Mark's, complete in all its fittings, and with the addition of an admirable Parsonage, was the munificent gift of two devoted members of our Church, whose names will long live in the grateful memory of Leicester Churchmen.* The total amount of additional Church accommodation, thus provided in Leicester, amounts to 3,600 sittings, all of them happily free. The population of the new Parishes thus created numbers 32,000. The total cost of these Churches, including the value of sites either purchased or given, amounts to nearly £40,000.

Northampton, with its smaller population of 43,000 souls, is relatively better supplied with Churches. One new Church, S. James, has recently been built and endowed, and its district assigned in a poor and populous suburb. The Parish of S. Edmunds, with its present population of 11,000 souls, rapidly increasing, greatly needs at least one new Church and will, I trust, ere long obtain it. Meanwhile, by the liberality of Churchmen in the town and county of Northampton, an Iron Mission Church has been procured, and provision has been made for the Services, for three years, of two Mission Clergymen, whose labours, spite of some most unforeseen and deplorable difficulties and hindrances, I trust yet to see bearing good fruit. In Wellingborough, the population of which has increased 50 per cent. since the last census, and is still rapidly increasing, one new Church has been built, and a second is needed, which I fully hope and expect soon to see built. On this subject of Church Building I cannot help expressing a doubt whether we, in this Diocese, are not still too much disposed to make the building of a large and handsome Church and the endowment of a district, the beginning and not the end of our Church extension. The living Ministry and the living Church that it may gather around it, should and might easily precede the material fabric. Far better is it that the spiritual wants of some growing neighbourhood should be met in the first instance by the roughest and readiest contrivances we can devise at the moment, than that they should be left unsupplied until we have provided ourselves with the latest and most improved parochial machinery. Far better that the congregation, gathered it may be

* William Perry Herrick, Esq., of Beaumanor, and his sister, the late Miss Herrick.

at first in some hired room, swarm out into the School House and wait eagerly for the Parish Church, than that the Parish Church should be built in its completeness and then wait more than half empty for the congregation yet to be gathered into it.

Our new and restored Churches, however, suggest one very serious practical consideration, namely, the preservation of their fabrics. If the work that we have done in this generation is not to be all done over again, with like cost and effort a century hence, some means must be devised for preserving our Churches from falling into the decay in which we found them. The abolition of Church Rates, on the ground that our Church was not a National Institution, by those who are now claiming possession of all Church property on the ground that it is a National Institution, throws on Churchmen alone the preservation both of Churchyard and of Church. The attempt to do this by a voluntary rate, must in the long run prove a failure. A voluntary rate will last just so long as each individual assessed under it pays his share. It will be repudiated by all, so soon as any are called on to pay their own share and that of certain defaulters besides. Sooner or later, therefore, the voluntary rate will fail us as a reliable source of income. And this again suggests the idea of Parochial or Diocesan Trust Funds, for the institution of which a legal machinery now exists.* Such funds might be commenced by an annual or quarterly offertory in each Parish, and would, it is to be hoped, be from time to time augmented by the gifts and bequests of pious donors. Only in some such way as this, I am convinced, can we make secure provision, not only for the maintenance of our Church fabrics, but even for the annual expenses of Divine Worship.

Fabric Funds
and Parochial
Trusts.

The whole subject, indeed, of Parochial and Diocesan finance is one that requires careful consideration, and it is one on which I hope to have the advice of our Diocesan Conference. One thing, however, I can even now confidently say; that Church finance, whether Diocesan or Parochial, can never be in a satisfactory state so long as it is not based in some measure on the Weekly Offertory. So long as we neglect the simplest and easiest, as well as most Scriptural mode of collecting the contributions both of poor and rich; so long as we depend solely on the spasmodic impulses of the "eloquent appeal" of the charity sermon, or the mute importunity of the subscription list; so long our income for Church purposes will be as irregular and as unreliable as the means we take to raise it. Happily the absurd prejudice which associated the weekly offertory with Popery is dying out. A Clergyman may now, in most cases, venture to obey the directions of his Church, by reading a few sentences from Scripture while his people give their alms, without being accused of wishing thereby, in some mysterious way, to lead his flock to Rome. Of course I do not counsel the

Weekly
Offertory.

* See Note (B.)

sudden revival of the offertory in any case where such prejudices still exist, nor, indeed, in any case without previous consultation with the Parishioners, still less without what should always accompany it, a full publication of all Parochial accounts. But I do advise all of you to put before your people the obvious fitness and advantages of this weekly almsgiving, and to introduce it in every case in which you are satisfied that it may be introduced without any violent shock to their feelings. I am persuaded that if you do this, you will find your Parishioners not unreasonable in this matter, and that the time has therefore come when, with very general consent, we might attempt the revival of the weekly offertory.

Daily Service.

Church Restoration and Church Building, however, are but means to an end. A far more searching test than these of our Church work is to be found in the use that is made of our Churches by Pastor and by people. What use our Church expects her Ministers to make of these is clear. She requires every Curate, "not being otherwise reasonably hindered," to say morning and evening prayer, calling his people to worship with him. No other meaning can be honestly given to this rubric, than that it contemplates daily prayer as the rule, and the "reasonable hindrance" as the exception. Certainly it does not contemplate the House of Prayer remaining closed from Sunday to Sunday. And yet this is too often the case, and that, too, where the Minister is truly pious and conscientious. For I should be sorry to think, that the want of these qualifications in the Minister is the reason why out of 533 Churches, from which returns have been made to my enquiry on this point, there is daily prayer in only 36 and no week-day Service whatever in 281. * The truth is, that to many this rule of our Church has become practically obsolete; the reasonable hindrance being, in their mind, the conviction that daily prayer, however desirable 300 years ago, is unsuitable to the habits of our age, and that with so many other things to do the Clergyman's time might be better employed in his study or his parish. I cannot think so. The age, so far from needing less, seems to me to need more, perhaps, than any other the lesson taught us in the public daily Service. For that Service is just the solemn protest of our Church against one of the prevalent dangers of our too busy age, the secularizing of our daily life. Her call to daily prayer is her solemn testimony that there is something of greater value than money—of more importance than business—even the one thing needful, the better part which they who choose shall keep for ever. And even for ourselves may not daily Service be a help to us against a temptation which specially besets the most zealous and the busiest of us, the secularizing of our very work for God, the temptation to forget, in the midst of all our activity, that prayer, so far from hindering, helps work, nay, is itself the highest and most blessed of all work?

* See Note (A.)

I am well aware of the serious difficulties which in many cases lie in the way of reviving daily Service. The difficulties, for instance, in our great Town Parishes, where the duties of our too scanty staff of Clergy seem already more than they can find time or strength to discharge. The difficulties in the thinly populated Country Parishes, where it seems often almost hopeless to think of gathering for daily prayer even the two or three who would make a congregation. And I am, therefore, far from advising that daily prayer should be at once attempted in every Church in this Diocese. On the contrary, I should fear that in many cases, much contempt and disregard of Holy things might be the result of such an attempt. Still I do earnestly counsel the endeavour gradually to raise our people and ourselves up to this higher standard of Church life, and that you should show yourselves willing by much personal sacrifice to help your Parishioners to reach it, should any of them desire to do so. Certainly we should, one and all of us, take care how we allow our congregations to think that going to Church on Sundays is the highest religious privilege and duty of a Christian man. One thing, at least, we might do in many cases with great advantage. We might throw open our Churches every day in the week for the private devotions of the people. Let those who may often have no other spot for private prayer, find here a place where they may enter in and speak alone with their "Father which seeth in secret." I do not believe that this privilege would be often abused. I am sure that ere long it would be gratefully appreciated. Another suggestion I would make to the Clergy of our larger towns. The time is, I fear, as yet distant when the number of worshippers at daily prayer will fill each of our Parish Churches. Why should not our town Clergy, meanwhile, set apart a certain number of their Churches for daily prayer, where, not one solitary Clergyman in turn, but many of them together should resort to pray with the people assembled from all their Parishes? Such Services would be imposing and hearty, and would not have the chilling and depressing effect which, spite of ourselves, we feel when one solitary Minister officiates for a few worshippers thinly scattered through a large building.

Church
Festivals.

The Festivals of the Church, are not so frequently observed amongst us as I yet trust to see them. The number of Churches, for instance, in which Ascension Day is not observed amounts to 155.* The disuse into which this day has so generally fallen is difficult to account for. It is not open to the extraordinary charge against Saints' Days, that they are Popish, for it relates to the life of our Lord Himself. It teaches, as do all the other Festivals connected with His life, one of the great dogmas of our Faith. It sets forth His presence in Heaven and His continual intercession there for us. And our Church has marked it accordingly with a special preface in her Communion office. Whatever be the cause of its neglect, I earnestly

* See Note (A.)

press on you the universal revival of its observance. The keeping of the great days in the Christian year is by no means unimportant. They bring visibly before the eyes of all, and especially of the younger or more ignorant members of our flocks, the great facts in the life of Christ on which Christianity rests, and so help, more than we are perhaps aware of, to prevent the distinctly Christian element in our Faith from melting away into mere Deism.

But more important, infinitely, than even the frequent week-day Services, or the observance of the greater Festivals, is the frequent celebration of the Holy Communion. If daily prayer be the rule, frequent Communion is assuredly the spirit and intent of our Church's Communion office. When our Church requires every Parishioner to Communicate at least three times in the year, she certainly never intended that no one of them should have the power of Communicating more frequently than this. This is the minimum of observance that she enjoins; it surely is not the maximum of privilege that she provides for her children. It surely never was her mind that their souls should be "strengthened and refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ" but three times in the year, as I grieve to say that in some, though happily but few, of the Churches in the Diocese is all that is permitted to the Parishioners by their Pastor. How the Clergyman can expect for himself that he shall have strength to do his Master's work, or bear his Master's Cross, if he thus starve himself of the heavenly food which his Master has provided for his soul's sustenance I cannot imagine. But I must ask where he has obtained the right thus to starve his flock? No Parish Priest can be justified or excused in thus laying his Parish for the greater part of the year under an interdict. Is it to be wondered at that from such Parishes there should come complaints of hindrances to the success of the Ministry, from the indifference and deadness of the people, and their utter disregard for all Church ordinances and privileges? What else is to be expected when the chiefest means of grace is so openly neglected and despised; when the highest act of Christian worship, the very centre and core of it all, is made almost a work of supererogation, a kind of excrescence on the ordinary Christian life, a special compliment in honour of the great Festivals, but really no part of Christian worship proper? Can we be surprised if those who have set before them so low a standard of Christian life and worship as this should fall below it still, should even plead in defence of their contempt for Holy things, their Pastor's open disparagement of the highest and holiest of them all? In most of our Churches, however, Holy Communion is now administered monthly, and this is certainly the minimum of Eucharistic privilege which should be provided in every Church. I could wish it, as I doubt not many of you do, more frequent. Weekly communion is that at which we should all of us aim, and to which we may yet hope to attain. It is not, any more than

daily prayer, to be hastily introduced; the people should rather be brought even to hunger for it, than that it be cast down before those who desire it not. But I trust we may yet see the time, and that ere long, when weekly Communion shall be the rule, and not as it is now the comparatively rare exception.

Evening
Communion.

In some Churches in the Diocese, I observe that Evening Communion have been introduced, and, as I am informed, with the effect of largely increasing the number of communicants, and that from a class who could not attend an early celebration. I have never been able to agree with those who regard Evening Communion as in itself a sin, or even as a practice forbidden by our Church. I cannot set aside the plain, and, to my mind, conclusive fact, that the first Communion was celebrated at Eventide, by Him who assuredly would not have done so had the certainty of His example being followed involved the certainty of sin! I cannot but see, moreover, that if the evils which arose from evening Communion in the Church of Corinth warn us of the danger the custom involves, it is clear first, that it was a custom in Apostolic times, and, secondly, that the inspired Apostle did not believe that the best way of preventing these evils was absolutely to prohibit the custom. I believe, too, that these evils are not so likely to occur in the case of the working classes, who mostly attend evening Communion, and whose dinner hour is generally some five or six hours before the Evening Service. Nevertheless, the practice unquestionably has its dangerous side, on which it needs to be guarded. It is open, in my mind, to this great objection, that it takes too much of the element of self-denial out of our religion, has too much the air of making the Service of God as easy as possible, in order to suit the convenience of every one, instead of requiring from every one the sacrifice of personal ease and convenience for the sake of religious privilege. Those who have Evening Communion should therefore observe carefully whether they only attend it who really cannot come to the Morning or early Morning Celebration. The moment that they find that others than these do come; that is to say, the moment that they find that the Evening Communion is made to suit the laziness of the rich, instead of the necessity of the poor, they may be satisfied that they are doing as much harm as good by continuing it. Another thing I would remind them of, that if to meet the necessities of those who cannot attend an early celebration they provide an evening one, they are equally bound to meet the conscientious scruples of those, and they are many, who cannot attend Noon and who object to Evening Communion, by providing at least one early celebration in each month.

As regards the extent to which our people avail themselves Attendance on
of the means of grace now so largely provided for them, we may, I Public
Worship.

think, safely say that the proportion of those who do so is not below that in other Dioceses. That this, however, is everywhere far below what it might and ought to be, we are all of us painfully aware. We have to face the fact, as undeniable as it is alarming, that large numbers of the people of this Christian country attend no place of Christian Worship whatever. This "alienation of the masses," not only from the Church, but from Christianity itself, is doubtless the result not of one but of many causes, many of which it is in our power to remedy, and some of which have been and are being remedied. The physical impossibility of worshipping while sufficient Church accommodation was not provided, is, as we know, rapidly passing away, though the irreligious habits caused by it will not be altered in the generation which has acquired them. It is to the rising generation, and not to that actually forced into irreligion, that we must look for our congregations of the future; and one of the most hopeful features in the present is the large proportion of the young in our congregations, especially in the towns. The pew system, too, that most ingenious and successful of devices for keeping worshippers out of the Church, and quenching all spirit of devotion within it; a system which carefully minimizes the amount of Church accommodation, by permanently appropriating to a few families the area which might otherwise be used in succession by more than one body of worshippers, is fast coming to an end. Free and open sittings, where the poor may take their seats, as Parishioners, with as good a right and as ready a welcome as the rich, are rapidly dispelling the notion, only too naturally prevalent amongst our working classes, that the Church was the place for gentlefolks but not for them; while at the same time they allow of the same Church being availed of by double and treble the number of worshippers possible under the pew system.

Shorter and
Varied Services

With open sittings have come, and they could not very usefully have come sooner, more frequent and shorter Services. One great practical hindrance to general worship in our Church lay in this, that our Services had come to be used on the principle, that all the worshippers would be free to attend at the same time, and all would come in about the same condition of bodily strength, age, and intelligence. Only on this principle can we justify the providing of only two long Services for all alike, young and old, strong and weak, masters and servants, ignorant and educated. Practically the result has been to exclude from Church many who could not come at the hours fixed for Divine Service, and to repel many who either had not the bodily strength to sit them out, or the spiritual culture to enjoy them. Whereas by holding more frequent, shorter, and more varied Services, not only can all worship in turn, but the shortened Services can be adapted to the bodily strength, the leisure, and even the ages and spiritual attainments of different classes of worshippers. This is absolutely

essential to our winning the multitudes to our Churches. If we would satisfy them all, we must do as our Master taught us to do, when He fed the multitude by the hands of His disciples. We must break up the great undistinguished masses into portions, making them "sit down by companies," and then proceed to break into convenient fragments the bread of life which He gives us to distribute. In this respect we have gained great facilities by the Church Legislation of this Session. The Act of Uniformity Amendment Act enables us, not only to use a shortened week day Service, but to use the different offices, so long amalgamated into one, not only separately but in varying order. A third Service, too, is now legal, if composed of words taken from the Prayer Book or the Bible. Our Churches may be opened also for a Sermon, not necessarily preceded nor followed by any Service. We hardly yet realize the amount of flexibility and adaptability which these most desirable changes have given to our Service Book. I look forward to most beneficial results from them in an increasing number of short and attractive Services, and of hearty worshippers in our Churches.

Let us not forget, however, that were all the defects of which I have spoken fully remedied, and many others beside, we should make a great mistake if we supposed that the alienation of the masses would be thereby entirely overcome, or that it ever was or could be in the power of the Church to overcome it. This phrase, "The alienation of the masses from the Church," like most current and popular phrases, has its mixture of truth and falsehood. It is so far true as it implies, that from causes plainly visible, and as plainly remediable, the Church has lost, in times past, large numbers of those who might have been now within her fold. But it is false, so far as it implies, that even if She had retained these there would not still remain large numbers alienated not only from her, but from Christianity itself. The accusers and defenders of our Church are alike too apt to forget that it is as truly the nature of Christianity to alienate as to attract; that our religion is the religion of Him who if He won the common people in crowds to hear him gladly, yet full as often offended and alienated them by His hard sayings, or His faithful rebukes. They forget that it is the nature of truth to offend heresy, of holiness to offend sin, of discipline to offend lawlessness. They forget how many of those now "alienated" would, in days of stricter discipline and sterner faithfulness, have been excommunicated, forbidden, that is, instead of entreated to enter our Churches. I, for one, protest against the quiet assumption—latent in so much of the patronising counsel, and patent in so much of the insolent criticism that we are receiving on all sides in this matter—that the sole blame for the alienation of the masses, or of the educated classes, lies at the door of the Church. I protest against the assumption that popularity is the one only and sufficient test of truth or of worth. To such a test

Alienation of
the Masses.

even political and social science refuse to submit themselves. We do not hold education proved worthless, because "the masses" care so little for it as to need to be compelled to accept it for their children. Nor do we call vaccination a failure, because numbers are so "alienated" from it, that they had rather be imprisoned than submit to it. On the contrary, we constantly act on the very opposite principle, namely, that the value of many things is to be estimated not in the direct, but in the inverse ratio of their popularity, and that it is the fault not of those who proffer them, but of those who reject them, if they are not universally accepted. But not only should we protest against this assumption, that the World is in no way to blame for its estrangement from the Church; we should guard against its influence on our own minds. We are in great danger of being insensibly influenced by the prevailing notion that the Church's worth is to be measured by her popularity. Such a feeling is fraught with most serious evils, some of which may be discerned amongst us only too plainly. It leads to moral cowardice and faithlessness, to softening and suppression of the truth, to relaxation of discipline, to wretched attempts at sensation preaching or sensation Services. It leads, in short, to latitudinarianism on the one hand, or superstition on the other, according as the multitude we seek to please are the educated or the ignorant. No! our faults may be many and grievous, but one fault, worse than all of them, would be to believe that in the Church's controversy with the World all the fault is hers. Once let her persuade herself of this, once let her regard it as her main duty to "conform herself to the spirit of the age," and the prophetic spirit will have died out of her. She will no longer "cry aloud and spare not," she will no longer dare to speak the word of the Lord, "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear." She will have taken her place in the World's great vanity fair, to raise her voice thenceforth only in crying for customers for her wares, and to shew her wisdom only in skilfully adapting those wares to the ever varying fashions of the hour. "An evil and a horrible thing" would then indeed have come to pass, even that evil thing which filled the Prophet's soul of old with fear for his Church and for his Country. The Prophets would "prophesy falsely and the Priests bear rule by their means," and what should we "do in the end thereof?"

Missionary
Work of the
Church.

But, if it be not, as most assuredly it is not, our duty merely to please the masses, it is our duty, by every lawful means in our power, to strive to win them. To do this we must not be content with making "all things ready" for their reception. Now, as ever, the invitation to the Marriage Supper must be pressed upon the unwilling guests. Now, as ever, must the Church not only repeat her Lord's entreaty, "Come," but must go out into the highways and byeways and "compel them to come in." She must beware of the danger, I had almost said the sin, of forgetting that her work

is everywhere and at all times essentially missionary work. Missionary not only, not mainly even, to the distant Heathen, but missionary, as was her Lord's to the lost sheep of the Father's House; missionary as was the good shepherd's who could leave the sheep in the security of the fold to seek the one lost one in the wilderness; missionary, as was that of her true prototype, who could leave, in seeming forgetfulness, her hoarded treasure while she swept diligently for the one lost coin until she found it. To neglect this work of self-sacrificing love in the safer and easier work of guarding what she already possesses, is not merely to neglect one half of her divinely appointed task, but it is to imperil the failure of that other part for which she has neglected this.

He who does not so truly love all the sheep committed to his charge, as to care for and seek for those without the fold, will soon lose, if he ever has possessed, the love that would bid him feed and tend those within it; may soon come even to acquiesce in their straying from it one by one, provided only that the fold be left, however empty, in his undisturbed possession. Certainly he will never gain that vigorous toil-hardened strength, that keenness of sight and quick watchfulness, that patient endurance, which though they come from encountering the perils and fatigues of the wilderness, are equally needed within the safer pastures at home. It is in the free collisions of opinion, in the controversies that bring us face to face, not with docile and respectful disciples, but with resolute and even angry opponents, that we gain those broader and yet clearer views of truth that fit us best to teach it to our own people. It is in dealing with all the direst forms of spiritual disease that lie outside the sanatorium of the Church, that we gain that practised skill of the physician, which will make us quick to discern and wise to treat the very first symptoms of the like disease within its walls. Be sure of this, my dear and Reverend Brethren, that to seek and save the lost is the best way of learning how to feed and keep those who are in the way of safety, and that he who is not a true missionary in his parish can never be more than half a Pastor.

To this truth our Church is becoming thoroughly alive. No more hopeful sign of her reviving life is to be seen than in the revival and growth of Church Missions, as a distinct branch of Church work. The conversion of sinners, the awakening and arousing of the careless, the reclaiming of the outcast, first by the ministry of the word, and then by close personal dealing of soul with soul and heart with heart, in bringing them one by one, lovingly, wisely, tenderly to Jesus, this is, thank God for it, the work which year by year is enlisting and training a larger and still larger band of practised and disciplined workers. It is a special work and needs special gifts for its right performance. Gifts not only of fervour and earnestness, but of unction, of spiritual insight, yes, and let me add, of sound common sense. It has, like every

Church
Missions.

work for God, its own special difficulties and dangers, but it has also its own special encouragements and rewards. Assuredly it is being largely blessed and owned of God.

It has been my privilege to take part in more than one such mission in this Diocese, and I trust to take part in many more. It is work in which one learns much, and of what I have learned from it, there are two things which I specially desire to impress on those of you who may be led to engage in it. First, that Church Missions are not needed only in the great towns; and, secondly, that they are not needed only by the poorer classes. Our country parishes need quite as much as town parishes the occasional stirring of their comparatively undisturbed and possibly stagnant life; and most assuredly the rich and the respectable need quite as much as the poor to be reminded that they have souls. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," is as true now as it was when those words were first spoken. The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, are as likely to choke the word now as they were when the sower first went forth to sow his seed. And be it remembered, too, that even as regards her power of winning and influencing the poor, the Church commits a fatal mistake, if she gives them reason to think that she regards them as sinners above all others, while dealing in their sight, with timid and invidious tenderness, with the sins of the rich and the great. Let her never forget that her Lord's words of sharpest rebuke were for the most respectable people of His day; that His scourge of small cords was knotted and wielded in the Temple, which wealth, not poverty, had turned from a House of Prayer into a den of thieves.

Let me add a caution as to one other special danger attending Mission work. The excitement which is often produced by the earnest and powerful preaching of the word is too often not only transitory, but perilous in its after-reaction. It becomes, however, a far more serious peril, if the preacher aim at producing it in every case as an evidence of conversion; still more so, if he fall into the further error, of teaching his hearers to regard it as evidence not only of conversion but of salvation. The heresy, for I can give it no other name, of instantaneous salvation; the notion, that is, that a man is saved at once and for ever the instant that he feels a firm persuasion that he is saved, is visibly tainting some of our Mission work, and is tending, as all doctrinal error ultimately tends, to loss of true spiritual power by the degrading of what is spiritual into what is materially visible or tangible. Once let physical emotion, or any other sensation or experience in ourselves, be regarded as the indispensable test of a man's salvation, and the getting up of these will become as mere a piece of legal formalism as any one of those "works" which the solifidian so energetically repudiates. In all our Mission work let us be true to the teaching of our own Church, that every baptized

soul is to be regarded as "a member of Christ," "a child of God"; not saved but brought into "a state of salvation," a state in which conversion is therefore possible, is almost always necessary in order that those who are in the way of being saved may attain at last to that final salvation which comes to each one only in that day when the Great Husbandman gathers His wheat into the safety of His garner.

Another test of our Church life is the number of candidates for Confirmation. A Confirmation tour at once reveals to a Bishop the weak spots in his Diocese. When, for instance, of two adjacent parishes he finds one, with a population of 4,000, sending 100 candidates, and another, with a population of 6,000, sending only 9, he has no need to ask what manner of men the respective Incumbents are. He knows at once, and only too well, what must be the condition of the parishioners who enjoy the Ministry of the one and of those who endure the Ministry of the other. In the main, however, Confirmations in this Diocese give encouraging results. The annual rate of candidates, for the whole Diocese, is a little over 11,000, a number which might be, and I hope will yet be, considerably increased, but which it must be remembered is attained to in spite of the very considerable opposition and even social persecution, which the candidates have too often to encounter. An opposition which, I confess, surprises me the more inasmuch as it comes in many cases from those who claim to be the special champions of civil and religious liberty, and who are never weary of denouncing the bigotry and intolerance of the Church. I have been much gratified by observing the pains evidently taken by the Clergy and Churchwardens in the Churches where I have held Confirmations, in rendering the Service impressive and edifying, as also by the care taken in accompanying the candidates to and from the Church, and in preserving them from those temptations which in olden times must have made Confirmations, in too many cases, a doubtful blessing.

The only wish that I have to express on this subject, is for a more equal distribution of the candidates amongst the centres for Confirmation. My great aim in multiplying these centres, as much as possible, has been to prevent over crowding at any one of them, more especially the crowding of country candidates into the towns. It is manifest that this object will be entirely frustrated unless the Clergy will agree to send their candidates, as much as possible, to the nearest centre. A little previous conference and arrangement would, I have no doubt, leave nothing to be desired in this respect.

Closely connected with the subject of Confirmation is that of the Education of the young in our day schools and Sunday schools. In the work of education our Diocese stands deservedly

Elementary
Education.

high, whether as regards the number, the sufficiency, or the efficiency of our elementary schools, a state of things for which, beside the zealous labours of the Parochial Clergy, we are mainly indebted to our well organised Boards of Education, and our system of Diocesan inspection.

The statistics of our elementary education in this Diocese, so far as I have been able to gather them from the returns to my visitation enquiries, are as follows :—

Number of Church Schools	542.
Number of Scholars	46,410.
Schools enlarged or built since last visitation .	105.
Schools inspected by Government since passing of Education Act	388.
Schools reported on by Government Inspector	276.
Accepted as Public Elementary Schools under the Act	224.

A great effort, as you are aware, was made in the last two years to enlarge and improve our school buildings in order to meet, during the so called year of grace, the requirements of the Education Act. The total amount of voluntary contributions expended on our schools since last visitation, from this and other sources, has amounted to £31,317. The number of places where School Boards have been established in the Diocese, amounts only to nineteen. These statistics shew clearly how largely successful have been the efforts of Churchmen in this Diocese to meet the educational needs of our three Counties.

A brief review of the history of elementary education in the past two years may help to define for us our present position and our duties in the future. When, some two years ago, Parliament proposed to deal anew with the subject of National education, it was found that the Church had so zealously availed herself of the opportunities given by former legislation, that nearly eighty per cent. of the children under education were in her elementary schools. This fact was naturally most distasteful to all who were either politically or religiously hostile to our Church. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that these should have united in a league, the main object of which was to deprive the Church of this vantage ground. This association combined from the first two distinct and even antagonistic parties, the Secularist and the Religious; the former desirous of eliminating religion altogether from national education; the latter desirous of retaining it so far as might be consistent with the exclusion of the Church from all share in giving it. Our Church schools were accordingly exposed from the first to the united assaults of those who hated the Church more than they loved Religion; and of those who hated Religion more than they hated the Church. The assault took at first the form of a demand for what was called Non-Sec-

tarian religious teaching. It was gravely, and I am sure most honestly, proposed by the religious wing of the association to discover, and to teach in the State Schools, some rudimentary form of Christianity which should be common to all Christian Sects and Churches in the country, and yet should have in it nothing so distinctively Christian as seriously to offend those who rejected Christianity altogether. This proposal had the remarkable peculiarity of violating every one of the most cherished principles of its proposers. In the first place it would have thrown on the State—utterly unfit in the judgment of these very persons for dealing with religious questions at all—the delicate and difficult task of extracting from all the religious beliefs of the nation their common element, and then of so defining this by Act of Parliament as to make sure that this, and nothing else, should be taught in the State school. In the next place, had the State succeeded in doing this, the result would have been simply the establishment and endowment of a new form of religion. A form which, moreover, would have been thoroughly Sectarian as regards all those who might not have happened to approve of it; while as regards religious equality it would have most unduly favoured those who believed least—and who, therefore, might have all their religion taught in the State school—over those who believed most and who, therefore, would have hardly anything taught that they could call religion. In short this earlier stage of the education controversy presented the extraordinary spectacle of Sects denouncing Sectarianism; Voluntarists proclaiming the failure of a voluntary system; haters of establishments demanding the establishment and endowment of a new State religion; and champions of religious liberty proposing to imprison Churchmen for refusing to send their children to schools of which they might conscientiously disapprove.

Happily for the nation, this extraordinary proposal to establish and endow, what would have been at best but a Parliamentary Deism, was found impracticable. It could not survive the attempt to embody it in a legal form, in the shape of the memorable proviso that in rate-supported schools no religious teaching should be given for or against the tenets of any religious sect! The force of absurdity could go no further. The religious difficulty was relegated by Parliament to School Boards, and the promoters of Un-Sectarian education at last confessed that they had “ceased to hunt after the phantom of an Un-Sectarian Religion.” The religious section of the League having thus failed in their attempt to exclude the Church from all share in national education by the invention of a new religion, the Secularists now claim to try their plan of thrusting out Religion and the Church together. They demand that in State schools no religious teaching whatever shall be given, but that this be left entirely to the efforts of the various religious denominations on Sundays; or, as they have expressed it, they claim—the School for the State; Religion for the Churches.

This proposal, in its naked irreligiousness, happily as yet shocks the mind of the English nation, which still desires, by a large majority, that religion of some kind shall be taught in our schools, though unhappily it cannot decide what religion this shall be. Accordingly anxious, honestly anxious, to preserve some element of religion in national education, the Non-Sectarianists have taken their stand upon the reading of the Bible in the Board schools. The logic, however, of their position is not equal to its conscientiousness. The reading of the Bible in a rate supported school is clearly a violation of the principle on which they oppose the teaching of the Church Catechism in such a school; namely, that no one shall pay directly or indirectly for any religious teaching of which he disapproves. The New Testament is rejected by the Jew. The Authorised Version is disapproved of by the Roman Catholic. The whole of the Bible is rejected by the Secularist, who denounces it as a collection of superstitious and immoral fables. On what principle of justice, then, is the Churchman to be forbidden to teach the Church Catechism to children of his own belief, out of respect for the conscientious scruples of Dissenting rate-payers, and the Dissenter allowed to teach the Bible to children of his belief in spite of the conscientious scruples of the Roman Catholic, or Jewish, or Secularist rate-payer? It is obviously as just, or as unjust, to teach the one as it is to teach the other, and certainly those who insist, on the ground of religious equality, in excluding the one will not long be able to insist on retaining the other.

Secularism, therefore, pure and simple, just because it is pure and simple, that is to say, logical and consistent with itself, has a tremendous advantage over its religious anti-Church allies in the coming struggle for religious education. There are, in fact, but three courses possible as regards the teaching of religion in the schools of a State where more than one religion exists. One is to teach all that you believe to that part of the school which will receive it: this is the Denominational system with the Conscience clause. The second is to teach a part only of what you believe to the whole school: this is the now exploded "phantom of a Non-Sectarian religion." The third is to teach no religion at all. The second being by common consent abandoned, the Church, which represents the first principle, stands almost alone, face to face with Secularism, to fight the great battle of religious education in the future.

Nor must we disguise from ourselves the fact that this conflict will be severe. I cannot share, at least, the optimist views of those who speak of our education difficulties as nearly at an end; they seem to me only beginning. I do not, in saying this, refer to the attempts that will certainly be made in Parliament to alter the terms of the Education Act to the pecuniary injury of our Church schools. These may not and probably will not be successful, and even if successful, I should not fear but that the increased energies of the Church

would more than compensate for any disabilities that might in this way be imposed upon her. The danger that really threatens religious education is one less direct and apparent, but for that reason all the more formidable. It is the strong tendency towards Secularism, in the practical working of the Education Act, both as regards the Denominational and the Board schools. In the case of the latter, Parliament having thrown the religious difficulty on the School Boards, they will certainly throw it, in their turn, on the teachers. Religion being the one subject on which the peace and harmony of the Board is likely to be disturbed, after a short period of religious contention, will, by common consent, be avoided as much as possible. It will become the teacher's business and not that of the Board. The teacher, however, will not be slow to discover that the one subject which is likely to bring him into collision with his employers is just the one subject which it in no way pays him to teach. Naturally, therefore, he will be more and more tempted to avoid this as much as possible, and if he teach it, to do so in the most perfunctory manner possible. Such a position must be intolerable for every earnest man who has any definite faith of his own. The result will necessarily be, that such men will less and less seek the office of School teacher, and thus our School Board system may gradually drift into Secularism; the aim of the Secularist being more surely and more safely, because more quietly, attained by eliminating religion from the mind of the Schoolmaster, than by eliminating it from the programme of the School.

On the other hand, as regards our own Church schools, it must be remembered that religious teaching is now merely tolerated by the State. It forms no essential part of the school programme, nor of the examination by the Government Inspector; nor does any part of the income of the teacher, necessarily depend upon the proficiency of the scholars in this part of their education. Naturally, therefore, the teacher is tempted to regard religious instruction as something that interferes with his real work; as at best a work of supererogation, which he may do for the love of it, but which it is directly his interest to disparage or neglect. Doubtless this is a temptation which will be and has been nobly resisted by many of our teachers, whose conscientious attachment to their Church, and love of the faith she has trained them in, we know and value as it deserves. Nevertheless it is a temptation, even to those whom we may have trained, while we must remember that efforts will be made to prevent our training any teachers hereafter.

Our real danger, therefore, in the future is this undercurrent to Secularism, both in Board and in Denominational schools, and our whole aim, therefore, should be to strengthen and deepen the religious element in our Church schools. In order to do this, it is clear that the Church must step in and fill the place which the

State has vacated for her, in the matter of religious inspection. If inspection be, as it confessedly is, an invaluable stimulus and corrective in the secular part of school work, I cannot see why it should not be so in the religious part of it too. I am quite aware that there is that in religion, which no religious inspector can test, and I am well aware too of the danger of knowledge of religious facts being substituted for religion itself; but this is really an incident, not of religious inspection, but of religious school teaching itself, which must, in the main, consist in giving religious knowledge whether of dogma, or precept, or history—a knowledge which it is all important our children should possess, and which may, like all other knowledge, be promoted by inspection. And, if there is to be such inspection, all will agree that it is desirable that it should be independent, authoritative, and, as far as possible, uniform. Only so can it really strengthen the hands of the school manager, by the help of a trained and impartial judgment and the weight of a recognised and authorised office in the Church. In this light I believe the greater part of the clergy and school managers of this Diocese have come to regard the Diocesan inspector. The old prejudice, which at first regarded him as something of a spy for the Education Board, or the Bishop, has almost expired. He is now, for the most part, recognised for what he really is, a valuable helper in the work of education, whose duty it is to ascertain for the manager in the first place, far more than for any one else, the real condition of his school.

I need not say to you, who know it better than I can, how admirably the Diocesan Inspectors in this Diocese have done their work—a work entirely, on their parts, a labour of love. We cannot speak too gratefully of their zeal and self-denying efforts, or of the impetus they have given to education. The question, however, has arisen whether, in the present altered position of the education question, voluntary Diocesan inspection may not usefully be combined with or even replaced by paid inspection. This question is one that certainly has two sides, and these have been so recently discussed at length in our Conference, that there is no need I should bring before you the arguments on the one side or the other. The practical conclusion to which we have come seems to me decidedly a wise one. We have, by the most liberal aid of the Laity of the counties of Northampton and Leicester, established a paid inspector for each of those counties, while in the county of Rutland, from no lack of willingness to contribute the necessary funds, but from unwillingness to disturb a very compact and well ordered system of voluntary inspection, this latter system is for the present retained. The two systems will thus be tested side by side, not at all in antagonism, but in friendly rivalry, and even with some degree of co-operation. A year hence we shall all be better judges as to their respective merits. Meanwhile all, I think, will be of opinion that that system of inspection

is best which best unites and directs the whole energies of the Diocese in one well ordered and uniform scheme of religious training; for we may depend upon it, that if we would not be beaten in detail, we must work altogether in this matter. The isolated Clergyman, in his own school, will find himself eventually unable to cope with the hostile influences of which I have spoken, and will need all the encouragement that can only come from united Diocesan action. The words "My school," "My Church," "My parish," are words that have worked wonders in their time. They express the deep sense of personal responsibility, as well as of real independence, which our parochial system generates: but the words "Our schools," "Our churches," "Our parishes," represent another idea not less important—one becoming more and more important—namely, that of the union, the conference and the co-operation which our Diocesan system was meant to foster.

Diocesan religious inspection, moreover, should be strengthened by prize schemes for the children, and by giving to the inspector's report some distinct value in the incomes of the teachers. But infinitely more important even than these material helps to religious education, will be the spirit which the Clergy may individually throw into this work, not only by their own earnestness in it, but by their sympathy with their teachers. There can be no greater danger to religious teaching than that arising from estrangement, or a sense of separate interests between the Clergy and the school masters. And if the Education Act, by giving, as it does, a more independent position, and a higher status to the teacher, rather tends to this, the only way it can be met is by the Clergy cultivating still kindlier and closer relations with their teachers—by joining, as I am glad to see in some parts of this Diocese they are joining, in their teachers' associations—by manifesting in this, and in all other possible ways, a personal and friendly interest in their duties and their trials—by shewing, in fact, that they regard the school teacher as their valued fellow labourer in the great work of the religious culture of their people.

One effect, however, of recent changes will be, I hope, to Sunday Schools draw increased attention to our Sunday Schools, as a most important element in the work of religious education. The Sunday school has become the substitute, perhaps not altogether the most desirable substitute, for the public catechising of the young as directed by our Church. Public catechising by the Clergyman, really well done and done in Church, is the best of all possible ways of instructing our youth, and indirectly our adults, in the doctrines of our Faith. Catechising, however, has become almost a lost art amongst us; and until it is renewed—until the order of catechists shall be revived, and even then in our large towns where the number of children are too great to allow of their being all catechised in Church—the Sunday school is indispensable, and should, therefore, be made as efficient as possible. That it may be so,

however, it should never be forgotten that *it is* the substitute for catechising in Church, and that its aim should be that of the catechist, the instructing of the young in their Belief. The Clergyman should regard the Sunday school teacher as his mouthpiece for this purpose. The weakness of our Sunday school system has been the notion, too commonly entertained, that a Sunday school is a place where children come to say collects and hymns, and to be talked to in a desultory way by any good people who may volunteer for that purpose: in short that any one who is only earnest and pious may make a Sunday school teacher, and may teach very much what he or she pleases. The result is that the minds of the unfortunate children, as they move from class to class and teacher to teacher, must, if they take in any definite ideas at all, become so many theological kaleidoscopes, filled with the many coloured and many shaped scraps of religious thought which they may have received from their successive instructors; while the Sunday school itself fails utterly to be what it ought to be, the porch to the Church, the place where the young are moulded and trained into intelligent attachment to their own faith. Nothing, indeed, is more common than for children educated for years in Church Sunday schools to pass over into Dissent, a thing simply impossible had they been properly instructed in the reasons for their own belief and trained to love, and to know why they loved, their own Church.

The Clergyman who really wishes his Sunday school to tell in his parish, should first choose and then teach his teachers. These should meet him once a week, to prepare their subjects for the coming Sunday. The lessons, not more than two at most for the whole school, and forming a regular and carefully selected course for the year, should be studied by the teachers under the presidency of the Clergyman; the best mode of treating them considered, the general line of thought, the main proofs and illustrations agreed upon, so that a character should be distinctly impressed on the whole teaching in the school. Some such plan, carefully carried out, would soon make the teaching systematic, definite, and really catechetical, instead of vague, desultory and merely hortatory. The children thus trained would pass naturally on to Confirmation and first Communion, and the Clergyman would not find himself, as he now too often does, compelled to begin by teaching in his Confirmation class the very first elements of the faith to children that may have been for years in his own Sunday school. Such a mode of teaching has, moreover, this indirect advantage for the Clergyman, that it tells not only in the school, but ultimately in the parish, where the Sunday school teachers become a band of his disciples, reflecting his teaching and supporting and extending his influence out of the school, as well as in it. I earnestly counsel all of you, who may not yet have done so, to form Sunday school teachers' classes, and I would suggest that you would find great assistance in conducting these classes

from the admirable publications of the London Sunday School Institute.

The Sunday school teacher, however, is but one of the many forms of Lay help that the Clergyman may call to his aid. District Visitors, Scripture Readers, Bible Women, Deaconesses, Sisterhoods, Guilds of Church Workers, are some amongst the various forms in which the services of pious Laymen and Laywomen are now being availed of for the work of the Church. No parish should be without some one of these. For there is no parish, however small, in which the Laity have not duties which are properly theirs, and there are few parishes, however large, in which the work of the Church might not be overtaken, if all the Laity who could take their proper share of that work would do so. I cannot say that this has been done in this Diocese at all to the extent to which it might and I hope yet will be done. The number of parishes in this Diocese in which there is no Lay agency of any kind other than that of Sunday School Teachers, amounts, I regret to see, to 388. Lay Agency.

The reason for this deficiency of Lay help lies, as it seems to me, neither in the unwillingness of the Laity, as is sometimes alleged by the Clergy, nor in the jealousy of the Clergy, as is sometimes alleged by the Laity, but in the want of a clearer appreciation on both sides of the true functions of the Laity in the Church of England. Our Church, on this point, presents a remarkable contrast to Nonconformity, on the one hand, and to the Church of Rome on the other. In each of these systems the Laity have their clearly defined position. In the former it is that of Rule and Government, in the latter that of duly authorised Service. The member of a Nonconformist congregation discharges functions which we think are properly those of the Presbyterate or the Episcopate. Nevertheless these are his known and recognised duties for the discharge of which he is responsible to the communion to which he belongs. The Laity of the Church of Rome, on the other hand, have equally definite spheres of work in the many Fraternities, Guilds, Sisterhoods and minor orders of one kind or another in which, under the direct authority of their Church, they may devote themselves to works of charity and piety. No such definite positions are assigned to the Laity in our Church. She has, indeed, carefully preserved the rights and privileges of the three-fold Order of the Ministry. But she has not followed the example of the Catholic Church in Her best days, by giving to the Laity their full and lawful share of duties and of privileges. The cause of this has been the excessive, and perhaps inevitable recoil at the time of the Reformation from the abuses and excesses of the Religious orders. The discredit attaching to these extended to all those ecclesiastical organizations in which the Laity had for ages

served the Church. These came to be regarded, and are still largely regarded, as Popish, instead of what they really are in their origin and idea, Catholic and Primitive safeguards against Romish exaggerations of the claims of the Priesthood ; asserting as they do the right of the Laity to minister in Holy things. The consequence has been, that when the Laity, sharing in the revival which has visited our Church, sought their share in her work for God there was no recognized place found for them in her ranks. Their offices had either become altogether obsolete or had merged in those of the Clergy. No wonder, then, that their first efforts should have been irregular, sometimes even disorderly. No wonder, either, that the Clergy looked at first askance on those who seemed to them to be usurping their functions, whereas they were only reclaiming, however irregularly, their own. This difficulty will vanish, is vanishing, just in proportion as the true rights and functions of the Clergy are more clearly recognized. Once let it be fully seen that the Clergy have certain powers and duties, differing from those of the Laity not in degree but in kind, and then it will be seen that all beside these may lawfully be claimed by and required of Laymen, without the least risk of their encroaching on the office of the Clergyman. Lay Preaching, Lay Catechising, Lay Evangelising in all its various forms, Lay Fraternities or Associations for ministering to the sick, the poor, the ignorant, with that special knowledge and skill which can only come from the long gathered experience and traditions of a special organization devoted to a special work, will be seen to be not only Lay rights but, what is far more important, Lay duties. Only let all these duties be performed decently and in order. Let the Laity recognize their Parish Priest, as one set over them in the Lord, not to rule them as so many subjects but to lead them as so many fellow soldiers ; and let the Clergyman fearlessly enlist and press into the Church's service every parishioner who shews any aptitude or willingness for work ; finding now the man for the office, and now the office for the man and uniting still all such helpers, from the least to the greatest, in one common parochial band of Church workers, who shall feel themselves to be Church workers—that is working for the Church and not merely as a favour or compliment to him—and Lay help in the Church will soon be something very different from the tentative, desultory, irregular thing it now too often is. As to the names we may give to such Lay organizations ; they matter very little. I have no love for the ecclesiastical pedantry which would insist on reproducing in the 19th century every institution that existed in the 12th or the 4th or any other century. The last thing I wish to see is our English Church dressed for a Mediæval or a Roman Masquerade. Call the Christian men and women who help you what you and they please, only get their help. The right name will soon attach itself, by a process of natural selection, to the right thing. Once let us have

the work and we shall soon find out the best name to give the workers.

One step in this direction I have taken in introducing in this Diocese the order of Lay Reader as approved of by the Convocation of our Province. The Reader is a Layman duly licensed by the Bishop to discharge, under the direction of the Incumbent, what may be called the office of the Evangelist. His duties are to seek out the poor and sick in the parish and bring them to the knowledge of the Curate, to read the lessons in the parish Church, to hold Mission Services, to preach at these, if he shews gifts for preaching, in short, to perform all the duties of a Deacon, save those which appertain to the stated ministry of the Word in the Congregation and to the administration of the Sacraments. No payment attaches to this office. It has, I am glad to say, been undertaken by Laymen of means and position in this Diocese, and I should be most thankful to see it spreading and taking deeper root amongst us than it has hitherto done. I am satisfied that our great town parishes can never be properly worked without a staff of such Lay Evangelists.

This subject of the organization of Church work in our parishes naturally leads up to the wider one of Diocesan organization. The Diocese and not the parish is the true unit of our Church system. The Diocese did not succeed, it preceded, the parish. The Missionary Bishop, who took possession in his Master's name of the lands of the Heathen began by forming his own *διοίκησις* or *παροικία*—for the Diocese was his parish—within which the cure of all souls was vested in him as chief Pastor. From his seat or Cathedral he sent out his Mission Clergy, to whom, as they succeeded in making converts, by degrees parishes were assigned, in which they held from him the cure of souls. But they were not, by this limitation of their mission, severed from their original relation to the Bishop or to one another as members of the same Diocese. They had their place, as of right, in the Diocesan synod or great Council of the Diocese, while those who remained at the central place of government, the Cathedral, formed the lesser Council or Chapter with whom the Bishop might take more frequent and intimate counsel on the affairs of the Diocese. The idea of a Bishop governing his Diocese by enforcing, by separate missives to his Clergy, their obedience to a cut and dried code of laws, was as little known to the Founders or the Reformers of our Church as it was to primitive Antiquity. No such heavy charge of solitary and isolated rule was imposed on us; no such scattered and disorganized existence was designed for you.

Diocesan
Organization.

Such a Diocesan constitution was essential to the true life of the

Church, not merely because it built up into one living body the separate elements of her parochial life, but because it gave to the one body thus formed that power of continuous and gradual change which is but another word for growth, and which is the distinctive characteristic and test of the living organism. It gave the Church the power of discarding from her system whatever had become obsolete, of adopting whatever had been proved to be valuable, thus providing continually new bottles, as it were, for the new wine that from time to time might ripen in her vineyards; it gave her the power, too, of checking the errors of individuals before they grew into schisms, of reforming abuses before they spread and hardened into general evil customs. In a word, it gave the Church that power of self-adaptation to the changing circumstances of her day without which no institution can long escape the danger of perishing either of decay or of violent and fatal disruption.

The revival of this life of the Diocese has followed in the natural order of things upon the revival of spiritual life in our parishes. The Church in her restored vitality is developing herself according to the inner laws of her own being. First, the revived Convocation, then Congresses, Synods, Conferences, are all attesting the deeper and still deeper yearning of the Church after those higher forms of unity which express while they preserve her highest form of life.

Ruri-Decanal
and Diocesan
Conferences.

You are all of you aware of what has been done in this direction in our own Diocese. With the valuable and ready help of the Rural Deans, who have thereby greatly added to the labours of their office, the Clergy and Representative Laity of each parish have been united in Ruridecanal Chapters and Conferences, for the discussion of questions affecting the interest of the Church. And from these Ruridecanal Conferences, by a system of elective representation, which I think in the main commends itself to the acceptance of the Diocese, has been formed our Diocesan Conference of Clergy and Laity, which has just held its second Session. The constitution of this Conference I do not propose now to discuss; it is doubtless capable of amendment, as it has already received most valuable amendments in its last Session. Other amendments will probably come as we continue to work it. I only pause at this point to thank you for the willingness you have, almost without exception, shewn to give it, at my request, a fair trial.

I am satisfied, however, that as the system of Diocesan Conferences takes root and grows amongst us, it will be recognized more and more by all of us to be an absolute necessity of Church life, not only as a centre of union both for Clergy and Laity and an impulse to Church work, but as a means of eliciting and expressing Church opinion. In most Dioceses in England a Bishop can now obtain, on very short notice, through the Ruridecanal Conferences the opinion of his Diocese on any Church question of

importance or urgency. He is placed thus, for his own guidance and support, thoroughly *en rapport* with all the Clergy and with the leading Laity in the Diocese, while they, on the other hand, have an opportunity of influencing by the expression of their sentiments that public opinion by which we are more and more being governed. In this latter respect the Conference is a step, and a most important step, towards our attaining that power of self-regulation and self-reform which seems to me by far the most pressing need of our Church. Of all the many and diverse Church reforms now advocated on all sides, the most needed is surely the giving power to the Church to effect for herself anyone of these.

At present our relations to the State are such that an Act of Parliament is required to effect the slightest change in any one of our rubrics. I leave you to imagine what would be the condition of the army or the navy if, a code of regulations for all departments of the Service having been drawn up 300 years ago, no power had been given to the heads of it to alter even the least of these without passing the proposed alteration through the ordeal of three readings and a Committee in both Houses of Parliament. One of two things would in that case certainly have happened. Either no new regulations would ever have been made, and the Service would, therefore, be now petrified in the condition in which it was three hundred years since; or else the existing regulations would be strained, evaded, and set at defiance at every turn, to the utter destruction of all discipline, and the ultimate disorganization of the entire force. This is precisely our case. Our rubrics and canons, drawn up three hundred years ago, are necessarily many of them obsolete, and some of them actually hindrances to our present requirements. The result has been a state at once of the most vexatious restriction and the most perilous license; the laws of our Church fitting her at this moment like an ill-made garment, tight where they should be loose and loose where they should be tight. What we most need, therefore, is the power of altering our canons and rubrics from time to time as we may find necessary or expedient, subject of course to the consent of the Crown in Council, and with the condition that any such change shall not have been protested against by either House of Parliament.

Power of Self-
Regulation for
the Church.

There is nothing whatever in the nature of our union with the State to prevent our having this power. Nor can I think that Parliament, which does not greatly covet Church legislation, would be very unwilling to grant us some such power; subject, however, to one very important condition. Parliament, we may be satisfied, would never entrust, and I think ought not to entrust, such power to any purely clerical body. The Laity should in some form or other be given both voice and vote in any such internal legislation. This being provided for, I cannot see that there would be any serious difficulty or danger in granting to the

Church some such right of self-regulation as she certainly so greatly needs. In what way and on what conditions a place should be provided for the Laity in our Church Councils—whether, for instance, this should be, as many propose, by their admission to a reformed Convocation; or by a body of Lay representatives, sitting at the same time with Convocation, as others have proposed; what again should be the qualifications of Laymen for admission; whether the Laity would submit to the revival of Church discipline which certainly would be required in order to define for purposes of legislation what a Church Layman really is—these are questions far beyond the scope of such an address as this. All that I care now to draw your attention to is the growing feeling among Churchmen of all parties for reform in this direction, and the evident value accordingly of Diocesan Conferences, as leading us up towards the solution of this question, partly by the example they are setting of Lay and Clerical union in Church Councils, but mainly by the strong body of Church opinion which they are gradually forming in favour of this first and most important of all Church Reforms.

Whenever this Reform shall have been effected, many another, which now seems hopelessly remote, will follow speedily and safely; for the Church is really far more anxious for her own improvement than those are who, while denouncing all her defects, jealously refuse her any power of remedying them. But until we do obtain this power I doubt very much the use, or even the wisdom, of urging any large schemes of Church Reform upon Parliament—a body at present neither especially willing nor, perhaps, especially fitted to deal with the details of such questions—but which, I believe, would be honestly desirous to give effect to any measures which had received the deliberate sanction of a really representative Church Assembly.

Church Reform

Meanwhile, we have ample opportunity given us for considering all manner of possible or impossible schemes of Church Reform. Their name is legion. They range from the most cautious and conservative improvements to the wildest and most revolutionary changes; while, as a rule, the wilder the change the louder are its advocates in urging it as the sole and only panacea which is to save the Church from impending ruin. The louder, too, is their denunciation of the timidity or faithlessness of the rulers of the Church, who hesitate at once to adopt all these contradictory schemes of radical reform; but who may, perhaps, be allowed to plead in their own defence that nothing is easier than to be brave and thorough going on paper, and that there may after all be as much moral courage in resisting a popular cry, as in earning a cheap popularity by adopting it.

I shall not attempt to discuss any one of these proposed reforms, partly because the subject is far too large to be treated of

merely as one amongst a number of others ; but mainly because, as I have already said, I am persuaded that our wisdom at this moment would be to concentrate all our energies, not in carrying this or that particular change, but in obtaining power to make from time to time as many changes as we may find to be needed. One or two general cautions, however, I should wish to suggest on this subject, knowing as I do how deeply it occupies the minds of all earnest Churchmen at this moment.

In the first place, then, I would suggest to you, that before you join in any "movement" for abolishing or reforming any existing institution in our Church, you be sure that you understand what you are proposing to reform. Be quite sure that you have really grasped its true idea and aim. It may be that you have not done this, and that if you had you would have discovered that what it really needed was neither abolition nor yet radical reform, but simply revival ; simply the better and truer carrying out of the purpose for which it was originally designed.

One of the questions most commonly asked by our root-and-branch Church reformers respecting any of our institutions which they desire to abolish, is "what is the use of it?" Such a question cannot in truth be asked too often concerning all our institutions, if only it be asked in the right spirit ; a spirit, not of impatient and shallow captiousness, but of earnest and reverent inquiry. Such inquiry might in more than one case result in the discovery of uses that have been neglected, and purposes that have been forgotten. It might result in the revival of old duties rather than in the abolition of old offices ; in the finding and requiring of work for income, and not in the cutting down of income just to the amount of work that at a given moment is being done for it. If we want an instance of the evil that may be done by the merely destructive and barbarous hewing and cutting down that too often passes for reform, we have it in the history of our Cathedrals. These were reformed, as we know, at a time when unhappily their efficiency was nearly at its lowest ebb ; and their reform consisted too much in simply reducing their incomes so as to provide exactly for the minimum of service they were then rendering. Now that our Cathedrals are beginning to reveal once more their capacities as great Diocesan Institutions, we are beginning to see that full work might be found for more than one of their suppressed offices, and fitting use for more than one of their confiscated incomes. The lesson is a weighty one for Church officers as well as for Church reformers ; it is the old one that all history, and especially Church history, is ever teaching us. "Whosoever hath to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."* Church work

* Luke viii. 18.

rightly done, is, after all, the truest Church defence and the only safe guide to Church reform.

This thought suggests the second caution which I wish to offer to you ; it is, to distrust all schemes of Church reform which do not emanate from practical Church workers, and from workers too in that particular department which they propose to reform. I confess to but small respect for philosophical reformers, whether in Church or in State, who evolve out of their inner consciousness abstract and severely logical ideas of State or Church, as they might or ought, in their opinion, to be, without the slightest regard for the actual concrete present of either as it really exists. There is no human institution which might not be conceived of as in some respects other or even better than it is, and for which it would not, therefore, be easy to sketch an ideal constitution quite free from all the defects that are to be found in it in its present form. Your theoretical reformer has, therefore, the double advantage that the evils of the system against which he inveighs, are always visible and tangible ; while those of the system he would substitute for it, are remote and invisible : he can always draw, therefore, upon facts for his censure, and upon his imagination for his promises. The worker, on the other hand, is a reformer, at once more modest and more useful. Knowing, as every good and honest workman must know, that the blame of failure does not always lie with his implements ; learning as he does to leave a wide margin, in every scheme of reform, for that disturbing element of which the theorist never takes account—fallen human nature ; he contents himself, instead of devising wide and sweeping changes, with simply seeking the removal of those obstacles which from time to time impede his daily task, or with devising from time to time such better ways of doing that task as experience teaches him.

When such workers, devoted as they are to their work, tell us of hindrances that they find in the doing of it and how they think these might be removed, their suggestions are entitled to all possible respect. They are sure to be practical, and will at least have all the wisdom that comes from a single eye and a humble heart. It is to such men that we owe all the real reforms and improvements of late years, and it is to such alone, I confess, that I look with any hope for wise improvement and reform in the future.

And yet such reformers would, I doubt not, be the first to admit the need for this other caution ; that before we attempt to remove any seeming obstacle to our work, we should be quite sure that it is an obstacle only, and not a restraint arising out of the essential conditions of the work itself. It is a thought so obvious as to be almost a truism, that what we regard as defects

and imperfections, are often only the necessary limitations by reason of which things are what they are, and not something else ; and, therefore, that we cannot alter these without actually destroying that of which they are a part, or changing it to something essentially different. It is, of course, quite conceivable that this something essentially different, may be infinitely superior to that which we would alter ; but we must clearly understand that we cannot have both. We cannot have at one and the same time the distinguishing advantages of two essentially different and opposite systems—we cannot, for instance, be at once Episcopalian and Presbyterians, Churchmen and Dissenters, Established and Disestablished, any more than we can be at once rich and poor, or young and old.

Simple and obvious as this consideration seems when stated, it is just the one most frequently overlooked by many of our Church reformers. These are constantly urging us to adopt some practice which they see working well in some other religious body, or to get rid of something in our own which they see that others dispense with ; without pausing to consider whether the change they propose may not be most undesirable just for the very reason that it suits other systems than our own.

One instance may suffice to illustrate my meaning on this point. Amongst the many Church reforms now advocated, few have met with more general acceptance from Churchmen of the most opposite parties, than that of the repeal of the Act of Uniformity, on the ground that it unduly fetters the liberties of the clergy of our Church. Probably few of those who ask for this reform, have asked themselves whether they would wish for the election and dismissal of the minister, or the imposition of forms of worship on the minority, by the majority of the congregation. And yet these would be the inevitable results of the repeal of the Act of Uniformity.

The minister of a Nonconformist congregation is, for the most part, free to use what prayers he pleases, but on these two conditions : first, that he shall have been previously chosen by the congregation ; and, secondly, that if his prayers displease them they are free to dismiss him. On the other hand, as regards the congregation, the freedom to choose and dismiss their minister exists only for the majority, the minority being only able to escape from a minister or a worship they dislike by forming themselves into a new body with another minister of their own choice. The clergyman in our Church, on the contrary, is not chosen, and cannot be dismissed by his parishioners ; but for that very reason he is not free to impose on them any form of worship that he may prefer. The same law that makes him independent of them, refuses to make them dependent on him for the manner of their devotions. Give him the power of praying for them as he pleases, and they, or rather the majority of them, will not be slow in claim-

ing their right to choose whom they please to pray for them. Which of these two systems, that of written law, or that of personal rule, best secures the liberties of the clergy and of the parishioners, is a question that seems to me to admit of very little doubt. But it is quite certain, that we must have one or other of these, and cannot have both; and that, therefore, until we have made up our minds to adopt for our rule of worship the will of the majority of the congregation with all its consequences, it is absurd to exclaim against its only possible alternative, the rule of written and uniform law. The principle which I have thus endeavoured to illustrate is one of very wide application, and would, if fairly applied, dispose of more than one plausible scheme of Church reform, as inconsistent with the principles of our Church and inadmissible, therefore, for all loyal Churchmen. Loyalty, hearty, unswerving, and intelligent loyalty to the distinctive principles of our Church is the one essential condition of all wise Church reform, and of all true Church work.

Three distinctive Principles of our Church.

What, then, we next proceed to consider, are those distinctive principles of our Church, which in Church reform as in Church work and in Church defence, we should ever keep steadfastly in view. They are, as it appears to me, these three: Our Church is first CATHOLIC; secondly, NATIONAL; thirdly, ESTABLISHED.

First.—Our Church is CATHOLIC. She is a true branch—in this country *the* true branch—of the Church Catholic, holding the pure Word of God, the Faith, and the Sacraments, and, with these, mission and authority from Christ to preach the Word and minister the Sacraments “according to His ordinance in all things necessary to the same.” As such she claims to stand distinguished; on the one hand, from all those congregations which, though consisting of “faithful,” *i.e.*, of Christian men, have not as she believes, any authority from Christ for their self-originated and therefore schismatical organizations; and, on the other hand, from the Roman Communion, which though retaining the succession of its ministry from Christ, having, as she believes, corrupted both the Faith and the Sacraments, and having certainly no authority or mission in this realm of England, is in her judgment at once heretical and schismatically intrusive.

Secondly.—Our Church is a NATIONAL CHURCH. By this we do not mean either that she is Established by the State, or that she includes within her pale the majority of the Nation. Neither of these circumstances constitutes her a Church National. On the contrary, these are only recognitions of the fact—existing quite independently of, and long antecedent to, any such recognition—that she is National. Her claim to this title arises simply from the fact that she is in England the true branch of the Church Catholic. It dates from the hour in which the first Christian missionary to

this country admitted into Christ's kingdom by Baptism his first converts. From that hour there existed in this country that visible kingdom of Christ, to which every member of this nation owes spiritual allegiance, and which, on the other hand, owes to every member of this nation loving and devoted service. All of numbers, of wealth, of State recognition that have accrued to the Church of England since then, are of the accidents, not of the essence, of her life. Deprive her of these to-morrow; disestablish, disendow her; diminish her numbers to those of the smallest of existing sects; and she would still be as truly the Church of England as the hundred and twenty in the Upper Chamber were the Church of Jerusalem, or the despised Christians of the Catacombs the Church of Rome.

As a Church National, moreover, our Church of England has her inherent and inalienable rights and powers, as distinguished from those of the Church Catholic of which she is a part. The visible Catholic Church is not a despotism, it is a Confederation of independent States, "a republic," as it has been called, "composed of many monarchies," in which each State, that is to say, each National Church, has, if we may so speak, its own distinct and independent State rights. What these rights are, as defined by our own Church, we shall presently have occasion to consider: enough if I observe at present that it was the assertion of these, far more than of any particular doctrines, which was of the essence of the Reformation. Doctrinally the Reformation was the correction of certain corruptions of faith and discipline. But ecclesiastically it was the assertion of the right of a Church National to make such reforms for herself; and it is in this assertion of her rights as a Church National that there lies the true and lawful Protestantism of the Church of England.

Thirdly.—Our Church is not only Catholic and National, she is also ESTABLISHED BY LAW: that is to say, she has entered into certain definite relations with the State, involving on the part of the State a certain amount of recognition and of control; on the part of the Church, a certain amount of subjection to the State, and of legally defined duties to every individual of the nation. On the precise terms of this Concordat between Church and State, it is not necessary for me to dwell. They are obviously variable, and indeed have been varied from time to time by mutual consent, while the union itself is terminable at the will of either party. All I now wish to say is that this union must necessarily exercise a most powerful influence upon the character, not only of the State, but of the Church. Those accordingly who desire to maintain it, as the vast majority of Churchmen do, must be prepared to do so on the ground that this influence is beneficial not only to the State but to the Church; unless indeed they are prepared to admit, what would certainly be fatal to the very idea of such an union, that it can only be main-

tained by sacrificing the interests of the State to those of the Church, or the interests of the Church to those of the State. Granting, therefore—nay, asserting most strenuously—that the Establishment of the Church by the State is of infinitely less value than either the Catholicity or the Nationality of the Church, and should therefore be sacrificed without hesitation if it ever really threatened either of these; we must, if we support it intelligently and consistently as Churchmen, do so on the ground, that in the main it tends to preserve both her Catholicity and her Nationality; and that its abolition might even seriously endanger both the one and the other.

Assuming, then, that these three characteristics of our Church—her Catholicity, her Nationality, and her union with the State—are all three to be maintained as contributing, though in differing degrees, to her healthy and vigorous life, it is clear that it is only by the combination of these elements in their due proportions, that her life can be preserved in the highest degree of vigour.

Danger to our
Church from
three different
directions.

Necessarily, therefore, our Church is always exposed to danger from three different directions. From the exaggeration of the Catholic element in her constitution, and the consequent weakening of the National; from the exaggeration of the National element and the weakening of the Catholic; from the exaggeration of the Secular and the weakening of both the Catholic and the National elements. The danger from the first of these is Ultramontaniam, which is the denial of all National Church life and independence. The danger from the second is Sectarianism, which is the denial of all Catholic order and unity. The danger from the third is Erastianism, which is the denial both of the Divine order of the Catholic, and of the true life and independence of the National Church.

The antagonism between these three elements in our Church may be traced through all her history. No great controversy whether as to doctrine, ritual, or Church politics, has ever arisen which did not evoke or rather which was not really caused by it; and no such controversy will ever be either wisely or safely determined without taking into account, not only the existence of these elements, but their respective value and importance in the mixed and balanced constitution of our Church. Perhaps at no period in her history has this antagonism been more distinctly visible than at this moment, and probably, never was she, therefore, at once so strong and so weak; so strong with the strength of great principles, powerfully felt and wrought out on all sides, so weak with the weakness which comes from the strife of great principles in the very crisis of their struggle—a crisis which must end either in disruption or in a renewed and deeper harmony.

It may help us, therefore, at once to a calmer and a juster esti-

mate both of our dangers and duties at this moment, if we trace a little more closely the working and the tendency of these three elements in our Church's life.

Catholicism, as I have said, untempered by Nationalism, tends to Ultramontaniam. It does so not by its assertion that there is one visible Holy Catholic Church—this rightly understood is the surest safeguard against Ultramontaniam—but by its assertion of a false centre for the unity of the Church Catholic: by placing it, not in the possession by many independent Churches of the fourfold unity of the Faith, the Word, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, but in the existence of one central and visible government, having the right and the power to decide infallibly, for all Churches, all questions submitted for its decision. Once this theory is fully embraced, it leads on by rapid steps from General Councils infallibly defining the Faith to general Councils defining the all but essential accessories to the Faith, Discipline and Ritual. Indeed, if there be anywhere a living infallible authority, there is no reason why these questions should be exempted from its decision any more than questions of the Faith. Naturally, therefore, those who insist upon the infallibility of the central authority grow more and more intolerant of any attempts at independence on the part of national Churches—whose eccentric freedom of action sorely disturbs their ideal of Catholic government—and more and more anxious to extend on every side the limits of infallible authority. On the other hand, as the Church spreads more and more, the difficulties of governing it practically in all details by general Councils increase; and so do the obvious advantages, indeed the all but necessity, of still more centralising the infallible authority; until at last the living voice of the Church representative contracts itself into the voice of one living man, claiming to have been decreed infallible by the voice of an infallible General Council. Thus the Catholic, who starts from the assumption that a living and infallible authority is essential to the unity of the Catholic Church, is driven step by step, to what is practically the denial of all true Catholicity, Ultramontane Romanism.

Exaggeration
of the Catholic
element.

This tendency of a false theory of Catholicity is only too plainly illustrated amongst us at this moment. The party in our Church which claims, I must say invidiously, the exclusive title of Catholic, asserts this theory in its extremest form. I think I do no injustice to the leaders of this school of thought, when I state their theory thus. There is and must ever be one visible Holy and Catholic Church. To this Church our Lord has by His promise guaranteed infallibility. The voice of this Church, whether uttered in her General Councils or in the form of Catholic consent, is infallible, and, therefore, necessarily binding on all particular or local churches. So much so that any

law of any local Church which contravenes the decrees of any General Council, or sets aside any practice or rite which has ever obtained Catholic assent is *ipso facto* invalid, and not only may but ought to be disregarded and disobeyed by every true churchman whose allegiance to his own Church is subordinate to his prior duty of allegiance to the Church Catholic. Consistently with this theory, those who hold it avow their desire to restore in our Church all pre-Reformation doctrines and usages, mediæval Christianity being for them that form both of doctrine and of ritual which most exactly fulfils the conditions of Catholic consent. Naturally and necessarily, too, the Reformation which disowned and rejected many both of these doctrines and practices, is the object of their bitterest dislike, a dislike which no words of theirs seem strong enough to express. Naturally, and necessarily, too, such persons resent all claim on behalf of their own Church for that right to make these changes of which the Reformation was the assertion. This in their view is "the frightful and sterile blunder of Anglicanism"; and those who maintain it and who show themselves loyal to the Prayer-book as it is, are held up to scorn as "mere Anglicans," "intellectual Cretins who cannot count beyond thirty-nine"; while the deliberate defiance of the plainest rules of our Church, the adoption of ceremonies which she has not only not enjoined but has positively forbidden, the teaching of doctrines which not even those who teach them can so much as pretend are not rejected by her, are gloried in as "revivals of Catholic principles" and "assertions of Catholic privileges." Naturally, too, those who claim this "Catholic heritage" of doctrine and discipline resort to the Church of Rome, as that portion of Christendom which has most faithfully preserved all mediæval traditions, as their teacher and their model on these points. And this not only on those broader questions of doctrine or ritual in which it is alleged that Rome has but preserved the traditions of primitive antiquity, but in those for which no such claim can possibly be made. No one can deny—the most advanced members of the party do not themselves care to deny—that it is, in its latest development, marked by a close and even a servile imitation of all the minutest details of Roman Catholic ceremonial; a hankering after Romish theology and Romish forms of private devotion; an almost childish affectation of all the most Romish modes of thought and forms of expression; in short, as they themselves express it, by a "deferential" "Latinising" of our Church; and that to such an extent that one might not unfairly suppose that the one aim of such persons is to make themselves, in all respects, as like Romish priests as possible, and their greatest happiness to be mistaken for such; and that the accusation which they would most keenly resent would be, that they were capable of supposing that on any point whatever on which the Church of England differs from that of Rome, she can by any possibility be in the right.

One phase, however, of this movement there is, which cannot justly be accused of tending to Romanism ; it is one which in the Church of Rome would not be tolerated for an instant : it is the liberty which is now claimed for each individual priest to carry out his own idea of what is Catholic in doctrine or ritual, without the slightest regard either to the written law or the living authorities of his own Church. The calmness with which this demand is made for what is termed the right of the Catholic priesthood, but which is simply a license never so much as heard of before in any Church in Christendom, would be almost ludicrous were it not most seriously mischievous.

A youthful priest—let us suppose—who has but recently passed an examination for Holy Orders, in which he may not perhaps have displayed any very profound acquaintance with Theology or Church history, finds himself the fortunate possessor of a living, into which he has been inducted on the express condition that he “assents to, and will use the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer and none other, except so far as it may be ordered by lawful authority.” No sooner has he been duly inducted, than he proceeds to set up in his Church the Roman Mass in all its minutest details, of which lights, vestments, and incense are but a small part ; he duly performs all the genuflexions, crossings, and prostrations prescribed in the last edition of his ‘Directorium,’ or his ‘Ritual for the Altar,’ adding to these from time to time, such “beautiful symbolismes,” as may either occur to his own mind, or may have been recommended by some correspondent in his Church newspaper, as the last “correct thing” in Ritualism. His parishioners, naturally indignant at this deliberate Romanising of their Church and their Services—in which they, perhaps, not altogether erroneously, believe that they have some rights, legal and ecclesiastical—remonstrate with him. He informs them in reply, that he is a priest of the Holy Catholic Church, and that as such, it is his privilege to teach and direct them in all things, and their privilege to obey him. They complain to the Bishop, who, on writing to the Incumbent to inquire into the truth of their complaints, receives in reply the information that all that has been complained of is quite true ; that the writer does not intend to alter his proceedings in the very least particular, whatever his Bishop may say to the contrary ; that as to his promise “reverently to obey his Ordinary,” that only means, that he is to obey such directions as the Bishop can enforce in a Court of Law ; and that, at any rate, whatever obedience over and above this he might be disposed to pay to a really “Catholic-minded” and “properly appointed Bishop,” he cannot possibly pay to one who is only “the nominee of the Prime Minister,” and has neither “the learning nor the piety,” nor “the Catholic sympathies” which alone would justify the obedience of a truly Catholic priest. Does his Bishop, in reply, remind him that he is not asking him to

obey his directions only, but to obey the plain and clear law of the Church of England, his answer is, either that the Church of England has not expressly forbidden the practices in question, and that he is entitled to do or say anything in public service, which is not expressly forbidden; or, if this cannot be alleged, he asserts that these practices have been forbidden only in the Court of the Metropolitan, whose judgment he cannot possibly acknowledge, inasmuch as he sits there "accompanied by a lay assessor," or else by the Committee of the Privy Council, whose decisions are for him simply so much waste-paper. Or, should, what he is doing be a clear violation of some Rubric, the purport of which has never been so much as questioned, the answer is still forthcoming, that the Rubrics being only those of a local church, he must decline to obey them, until they can be proved to him not to be opposed to the only law he acknowledges, viz., that of the Church Catholic of which he is a priest—a condition, which, as he is himself to be the sole judge of the sufficiency of the proof, does not, certainly, much restrain his liberty of action, and which amounts, in plain English, to the declaration, that he means to do precisely what he pleases, and that for him, the promise—"I will use the form prescribed in the Book of Common-Prayer, and none other"—means, "I will *not* use that form, and I *will* use any other that may commend itself to my judgment, or strike my fancy." Finally, if his Bishop, having exhausted every effort of remonstrance, counsel, and even of entreaty, proceed, at last, to enforce the law and discipline of the Church of which he is a Chief Pastor, he is met by an indignant cry of tyranny and persecution, and fierce accusations of attempting to stamp out the liberties of the Catholic priesthood; followed, probably, by a denunciation of the hateful union between Church and State, by virtue of which, nevertheless, and of the legal status it gives him, this much aggrieved priest alone possesses the legal power to defy his Bishop.

It would be to waste your time and my own, to spend any words in refuting this most extraordinary theory of the absolute independence of the Presbyterate of our Church; for it is clear that this phase, at least, of the so called Catholic movement, can be but a passing one. No Church, no organized body whatever, could long continue to exist which tolerated such chaotic license as this. But we may be allowed to remind those who are thus defying all law and order whatsoever, that the almost certain result of their proceedings will be the loss of those very liberties which they are thus abusing. Whether this movement end as its more advanced leaders desire, in reconciliation with Rome, that is to say, in submission to the Papacy,—for Rome will have us on her terms, and not on ours,—or in the disestablishment for which they are clamouring, that is to say, in the substitution for the fixed laws to which the clergy are now subject, the ever varying rule of the will of the majority enforced

in State Courts, on the ground of contract, far more stringently than our present laws are, on the ground of correction and discipline—or, as is far the most probable, in some sharp and sweeping reform of our present laws ecclesiastical, which will give to the laity of the Church new powers for enforcing their wishes in matters of ritual and discipline; in whichever of these results the present lawlessness ends, it will be one which will leave very little of their present freedom to the parochial clergy of our Church. Perhaps the more impatient spirits amongst us, now fretting under Episcopal tyranny and bondage to the State, might then discover that the tyranny of a congregation is worse than that of a Bishop; that law is the only true safeguard of freedom; and, that, they were not, after all, the best friends of the liberties of the clergy, who encouraged them to disobey, but those who exhorted them to obey the laws of their own Church.

There is no need, however, to discuss the truth of that theory of Catholicity by which these lawless proceedings are justified,* inasmuch as it is expressly and formally repudiated by our Church.† So far from asserting the infallibility of general councils, she categorically denies it. “General Councils, she declares, may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God.” So far from admitting her subjection to their decrees “in things necessary to salvation,” she declares that these “have neither strength nor authority,” unless it may be declared (*i. e.* clearly shown) that they be “taken out of Holy Scripture.”‡ Even the Creeds she receives, not because they have the authority of Councils nor yet of Catholic consent, but because “they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture,”§ the one only absolutely infallible and supreme authority in matters of faith which she recognizes. In matters of ritual her assertion of her own independent and inherent authority is even more clear and emphatic. “Every particular or National Church,” she maintains, “hath authority to ordain, change, or abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church” (*i. e.* of the Church Catholic), “ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.”|| And in her Preface “Of ceremonies, why some be abolished and some retained,” she still more clearly and fully asserts this right, while defining the conditions under which she exercises it. One rule, and one only, she there lays down, as that which is to regulate “all things done in the Church,” in “ceremonials of human institution,” and that is “edification.” Whatever ceremonies, even though “originally of goodly intent and purpose devised,” may have ceased to fulfil this end, she claims the right to change, or, if needful, “to put away.” This is a claim which goes

* See Note (C).

† See Note (D).

‡ Article xxi.

§ Article viii.

|| Article xxxiv.

to the root of the theory of Catholic assent as the rule of ritual; the most ancient and universal of rites—not having the authority of Holy Writ for its perpetual observance—becoming on this principle a mere *Nehushtan*,* a thing to be utterly abolished, if it should have become at any time so “abused to error or superstition” as that “the abuse could not be taken away, the thing itself remaining.” The unity of the Catholic Church, therefore, clearly, according to the teaching of our Church, does not consist either in a central infallible authority or in the identity of any rites or ceremonies not expressly enjoined in Scripture; but in the common possession by many independent Churches of the four unities—of the Faith, the Word, the Sacraments, and the divinely appointed Ministry. To reject or to lose any one of these would be to sever herself from the Church Catholic. But short of this, she claims most clearly and unhesitatingly the right of every Church National to self-government and self-reform in all things pertaining to edification. And it was in the vindication for her of this her truly “Catholic heritage” of self-rule, subject only to the authority of God’s word, that the Reformation was of such vital importance to our Church.

It were a bold thing to say that on every point in which that great change made her to differ from the Church of Rome, she carried away absolutely all the truth and Rome only all the error. But one great vital truth the Reformation did re-assert for her distinctly and precisely, and that was the freedom and independence of National Churches; delivering her thereby thoroughly and, let us hope, for ever, from the “grasp of the dead hand” of the past, to which the so-called Catholic theory would once more subject her, to the utter paralyzing of her free national life, and to the practical denial of the continued presence in her of her Lord.

But all-important as is this assertion of the inherent rights of the Church National, it may in its turn be pushed too far. We may easily pass from denying the infallible authority of general Councils to denying them any authority, *i.e. auctoritas*, or weight whatsoever; or, from denying that an absolutely Catholic assent can ever be so ascertained as to be dogmatically binding, to forgetting that the general adoption of any practice by the undivided Church must always be a strong presumption in its favour, not to be set aside, but on the still stronger ground of that *Salus populi*, which, as we have seen, is the *suprema lex* of our Church. Or we may so exalt the idea of the Church National as to lose sight of, or even to deny, the existence of the visible Church Catholic. We may, in our recoil from the error of asserting a false centre of unity for the Catholic Church, pass into the extreme of asserting

* 2 Kings xviii. 4.

that it has no objective or historical unity whatever, and that the only unity of Christ's Church is the inward unity of the Spirit which joins individual Christians with each other and with Him. Churches being on this theory simply those external forms into which the religion of individual Christians has, as it were, accidentally crystallized, can claim, as of right, no authority over their members, who, in the freedom of the Spirit, must have the right to recast their own organization, to form themselves into entirely new bodies, as often they may think proper. Every such body, though but of yesterday, has an equal right to the title and the authority of a Church. Nay, each individual member of such a body is on this theory quite competent in his turn to set up a new and equally true Church for himself. Thus the assertion of the independence of National Churches, unlimited by the recognition of visible Catholic unity, ends in the very "dissidence of dissent;" the stream of Catholic order and doctrine sinking at last into the sands of the merest Individualism.

Such are, as it seems to me, the logical results of the denial of the existence of the visible Church Catholic. And though we should be far from charging those amongst us who hold this theory with aiming at the results which logically flow from it, we cannot but recognize in their history tendencies in that direction. We can see these, I think, in the depreciation of those two links with the Church Catholic which appertain most to the idea of the corporate life of the Church, viz., the Ministry and the Sacraments; in the denial of the Apostolic succession of the one and in the understating, if not the denial, of the grace and efficacy of the latter; in the undue depreciation of all the objective side of our religion, as "merely outward form and ceremony," and the undue exaltation of all that is purely subjective; in the lightly regarding the sin of Schism, provided only that the schismatic retain those particular doctrines which subjectively unite him with Evangelical Churchmen; in the fraternising with dissenting communities, as "other Churches," and holding out to them as communities, what God forbid we should deny them as individuals, the "right hand of fellowship;" in an impatience of that fulness of doctrinal statement and breadth of comprehensiveness in which consists the true doctrinal Catholicity of our Church, and in a consequent readiness to narrow within the limits of one school of thought the broad stream of Catholic doctrine which, just because it is full, must touch both its banks almost to overflowing. In a word, a tendency towards Sectarianism within the Church, and towards alliance with Sectarianism outside it, warns us that our Church is exposed to dangers from ultra-Puritanism as well as from ultra-Catholicism.

Once more; we recognize the existence amongst us of a third School of thought that, like the other two, asserts a great truth which yet, without its due limits, leads to perilous error. Eras-

Exaggeration
of the Secular
element.

tianism is but the exaggeration of the truth—never to be forgotten, never more needing to be remembered than at this moment—that the State as well as the Church is a Divine thing; is truly, if in a lower degree, and for lower purposes, ordained of God; and has therefore its true and real relations to Him and to His Diviner kingdom the Church. That it is not, therefore, to be regarded, as extreme High Churchmen and Dissenters agree in regarding it, as an unclean thing from which the Church is to stand utterly apart in holy separation, with which any union whatever on her part is nothing short of spiritual adultery; but rather as, in its ideal at least, a holy thing truly consecrated to God with which a union on the part of the Church is not adultery, but lawful and sanctifying alliance; and that so far from such union being necessarily the degradation or the injury of either, it may be the highest form of existence for both. For one I am not ashamed to confess that I believe this theory—nay, that I believe it to be one most wholesome and necessary for these times, as the strongest protest against that most pernicious modern heresy, that the Secular and the Spiritual are things not only separable, but always to be separated. In their protest against this error, I am persuaded that the so called Erastians do the Church a great service.

But this assertion of the Divine origin, and therefore of the religious idea of the State needs to be tempered by the strongest and clearest assertion of the Divine origin and authority, the Divine rights and privileges of the Church. If not, there is the danger, nay the certainty of the Church coming to be regarded as simply a function of the State—its mere creature and servant—to be moulded and remoulded at its pleasure. The clergyman, on this theory, is simply a kind of moral policeman, hired by the State to keep the people moral and obedient to the law, and whose duty it is accordingly to tell them from Sunday to Sunday to be good. His doctrines however, that is to say his reasons why people should be good, must be subject to alteration from time to time as the State may think best, just as she might alter the weapons or accoutrements of her soldiers. While as to his holding his office and his right to teach by virtue of a higher authority than that of the State—as to his being an officer of a mightier and higher kingdom than any earthly one, having not only eternal and unchangeable truth to teach and supernatural gifts and graces to convey, but having the rights and privileges of this kingdom to maintain against any earthly power whatever—this is regarded as sacerdotal bigotry and presumption, only to be tolerated by a liberal State so far as it is restrained by law within limits that make it practically harmless, but which must from time to time be warned of the peril of asserting itself too plainly, and reminded that if the Church is to remain established she must learn to be less dogmatic, and to put herself more in accord with the “liberal and enlightened spirit of the age.”

And though we should be as far as possible from charging all of this School of thought with aiming at these results, yet we cannot fail to see amongst them tendencies in this direction—demands, for instance, for the abolition of all doctrinal tests for admission to the ministry of our Church; complaints of the too dogmatic character of our Creeds; proposals for the admission of any one and every one, schismatic, heretic, or unbeliever to her pulpits, or to a share in councils which are to regulate the minutest details of her worship; attempts at still further relaxing her discipline, already far too lax; all put forward under the attractive and doubtless the honest plea of preserving the Establishment by widening the basis of our Church, and so making her more truly national. All these seem to me tainted with the same error, and fraught with the same peril; the error of supposing that our Church is national only because she is Established, the peril of destroying her really national character without saving her Establishment. I say without saving her Establishment, for after all this exists because she is believed to have some definite truth to teach to the nation. Once let it be clearly understood that she really has nothing particular to say to the people, while any other religious body might say that nothing with just as much authority as she possesses—that in short she has only to tell them that it does not much matter what they believe, provided that they only believe that it does not matter—and the English people will have less common-sense than they are generally given credit for, if they fail to draw the conclusion that it is hardly worth while maintaining an Establishment for this.

Thus we see how each of these three parties in our Church, working out its own distinctive principle to its logical conclusion, ends actually in destroying the very thing for which it is contending. The Catholic, aiming at the unity of Catholic consent, ends in the wildest licence of private judgment. The Protestant, aiming at the independence of the National Church, ends by resolving this Church into a multitude of sects. The Establishmentarian aiming at the security of a Church established by law, ends in the certain destruction of the Establishment he seeks to preserve. Each of these, in fact, needs the assistance of the other to maintain his own position in the English Church. The Catholic cannot defend his position against the arguments of Romanism until he has learned to limit his extreme theory of a visible Catholic unity by that assertion of the rights and independence of the National Church which he has denounced as Protestantism. The Protestant Churchman can never hold his ground against the arguments of the Dissenter without the recognition of that idea of a visible Catholic Church which he denounces as Popery. The Establishmentarian can never defend the Establishment against the arguments of the Rationalist until he recognizes the fact that the

true comprehensiveness of our Church consists in her Catholicity, and that inclusion, however wide you may make the limits of the enclosure, implies something to be excluded as well as something to be included. In truth, each of these parties, little as it might be disposed to own it, has learned, is learning, much from the other two. There is more of Evangelicalism in the High Churchman, more of High Church principle in the Evangelical, more of Dogma in the Broad Churchman than would flow from their own avowed principles ; but which comes for each from the influence of those to whom he is most opposed. Candid and earnest men of all parties are learning to recognize this more and more ; are coming to understand that it is not given to any one School, or to any one Age, any more than to any one man, to see truth on all sides ; but that it is rather by the assertion, the necessarily one-sided assertion, of different aspects of truth, that the whole body of the truth can be preserved. And so each comes in turn, not only to endure, but to value the presence of the other in the Church, to feel that there is an appointed and an important work for each one of them to do, which can be done by that one only. And thus while extreme men on either side are pushing their views to extreme lengths, standing as far apart as possible, denouncing each other so loudly and so bitterly, that it might be thought the Church must speedily be torn asunder by their strife, the Church herself—larger, wider, greater than any one of the parties within her—may be gaining from their very strife a larger and a firmer grasp of the truths of which she is the guardian—a clearer perception of the limits beyond which her children may not safely stray ; the very errors and excesses of each party, their very shipwrecks of the Faith, sad as they are to see, serving to buoy out on the right hand and on the left the deep mid-channel of the Church's course. It is to this growth of a sound and loyal Churchmanship—taught in turn and learned in turn by each of the great parties in our Church—that we must look under God for her safe passage through the troubled waters on which she is now tossing. No laws, however stringent, no prosecutions, however frequent, will without this, preserve the purity of the Church. Disloyal men will always contrive to come just within that hair-breadth of law-breaking which every prosecution enables them the better to discern. Once let this spirit of disloyalty, therefore, be generally prevalent and laws will be of little use ; and, on the other hand, let but a spirit of loyalty prevail, and occasional breaches of the law, however flagrant, will have no lasting ill effects. I do not mean to say that these are not to be repressed or punished. I do not forget that laws which are never enforced must fall into general contempt ; but I do say that it is not to the penal enforcement of law, however necessary that may be, but to the loyalty of Churchmen we must mainly look for the deliverance of our Church from perils even greater than those through which she is

now passing. "*Dilige et fac quod volest*" is the true spirit of all Church legislation. Our Church cannot safely tolerate, she ought not to tolerate for a single day those "wilful and contemptuous transgressions" of her order and discipline which spring from hatred of her essential principles and disloyal denial of her claims on the obedience of her own children ; but she can and ought to bear much and long with the errors of her loving sons, who, truly loyal to her authority and honestly desirous of acting in the spirit of her teaching, err, when they do err, but from excess of zeal for her honour, and for her greater success in her great work in winning souls for her Lord and Master.

Only in this spirit of loyalty to our own Church and of brotherly charity towards each other, can we encounter the perils of our day. Only thus shall we escape at once the bitter and estranging suspicion which aggravates each minor difference into a heresy, and the weak spirit of compromise which fears to recognize the reality and the extent of our greater differences. We cannot, if we are true to our own convictions, sink, as it is phrased, our differences. On the contrary, we must recognize them, utter them, and very often act on them. Nevertheless, we may believe that spite of these—nay, by means of these—the ever present Spirit of God may be leading us all on to higher forms of Christian life and deeper views of Christian truth. In this spirit, let us endeavour to deal with each one of the questions that divide us now, or may divide us hereafter ; seeking, praying, resolving that our inevitable controversies shall be carried out, at once so honestly and so lovingly, that neither by our lack of faithfulness shall the Church suffer loss of truth, nor by our lack of charity, shall she suffer loss of unity.

It is in this spirit, that I would fain hope we may yet be enabled to deal with what seems at this moment to be one of the gravest questions which have arisen since the Reformation. I mean the present controversy as to our use of the Athanasian Creed. Not unwillingly would I have avoided this topic, on which I know that the views I have already expressed differ widely from those most dearly cherished by many amongst you, whom I love and honour. And yet had I done so, I do not believe that I should really have promoted our unity as a Diocese, and that—not merely because my silence would certainly not have prevented or lessened a controversy which pervades our whole Church—but because it would necessarily wear in your eyes the appearance of regarding this question as one of so irritating a nature, that I must shun it in my intercourse with you. I have no such fear. I do not, and I pray that I never may, fear to speak in your presence with fullest frankness and clearness, what, as before God, I believe to be true. Besides, you have a right, my Reverend Brethren, to

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expect from your Bishop a distinct utterance on such a question as this, and you would hold, I am sure, that one thing would be far worse than any amount of error in what I might say respecting it—namely the cautious cowardice that refused to say anything at all. Let me, then, say what appear to me to be the present aspect and probable issue of this controversy respecting the Athanasian Creed.

In the first place, then, I would observe, that wide and deep as are the differences that divide us on the subject of this Creed ; there are some points, at least, on which we are all rapidly coming to an agreement. One of these is, that the controversy has reached a stage at which it cannot possibly stop. For good or for evil, it has worked itself to this point, that the Creed, with its accompanying rubrics, will not remain exactly as it is. Some concession, it is now clear, will be made to the scruples, reasonable or unreasonable, of those who feel their consciences burdened by the use of the Creed, exactly “as it is and where it is.” Its extremest defenders are, for the most part, willing to go in this direction the length, at least, of an explanatory Rubric, or a synodical declaration as to its meaning ; neither of which, certainly, would leave the Creed exactly “as it is,” though they would leave it “where it is” in our Prayer-Book. Another point, on which we are all fast agreeing, is this—that no one proposed solution of this question can be regarded as perfectly free from serious difficulties or objections ; that so far from these solutions being, any one of them, “small changes” of trifling import, they, every one of them, really involve questions of principle, running far and deep under the very foundations of our Church ; and that, therefore, settle it how we may, there can be no settlement of the question which will not demand on one side or another, some sacrifice of strongly-cherished preference, if not of conviction. One thing more I think we have gained by the discussion of the last six months, and that is, that we have got rid of certain minor questions which arose, as they are sure to arise at the beginning of every great controversy, and which served only to obscure its real issue—questions, for instance, as to the date and authorship of the Creed, or as to certain minute improvements in the translation of it, which all are now agreed in regarding as almost, if not altogether, immaterial. ; And amongst these, let us hope, may ere long be classed the still more irrelevant questions as to the motives and aims of the disputants on either side, of which this controversy has already had, at least, its full share. Railing accusations on the one hand, of “dishonesty,” “profligacy,” “immorality,” “shameless baseness,” “treachery to ordination and consecration vows,” “hatred of all definite religion,” “covert sympathy with scepticism,” may, let us hope, be allowed to pair off with accusations on the other side of “clerical bigotry,” “priestly arrogance and intolerance,” and “delight in the idea

of the perdition of those who differ from us." Hysterical exclamations of this kind serve the cause of truth as little as they do that of charity, and we may agree to dismiss them from our minds with only the expression of a hope that the authors of these latest of damnatory clauses, may yet be enabled to read them with such explanatory rubrics as their calmer and better reason may suggest.

Setting aside, then, all such minor and really irrelevant considerations as these; two questions, and only two, as it seems to me, stand out clear and distinct from all the rest as those on which the decision of this controversy must ultimately turn: First, has the Church of England the right to touch the Athanasian Creed at all? Secondly, assuming that she has this right, is there any sufficient reason why she should exercise it? It is clear that if either of these questions be decided in the negative, there is practically an end of the whole controversy. And it is equally clear, that until they have both been decided in the affirmative, it is premature, and, what is more, it is extremely confusing to discuss any particular mode of dealing with the Creed.

The first of these questions is, obviously, one of those conflicts of principle of which I have just been speaking. It is really a question between the rights and authority of the Church National and the Church Catholic. Those who protest against any dealing whatever, or, as they would say, any tampering with the Athanasian Creed by our Church, do so on the express ground that all such dealings are for her *ultra vires*. They remind us that the Creed is one of the creeds of the Church Catholic; a part therefore of the *Depositum Fidei* "divinely given to our Church," of which she is only the guardian, and of which she may not therefore alter so much as a letter without proving faithless to her trust, and without "severing herself from the unity of Catholic Christendom."

To this assertion it might be replied, that whatever degree of truth it might have as regards the Nicene Creed, it is not true of the Athanasian, which has neither the authority of any general Council, nor, in the form in which we receive it, the acceptance of the Church Universal.* Granting, however, that the Athanasian Creed stood exactly on the same footing as the "Niceno-Constantinopolitan," would the Anglican Church have therefore no right to alter so much as a letter of it? Those who say so must either assert the infallibility of general Councils, which our Church expressly denies, or they must prove, as they certainly cannot prove, that even the Nicene Creed, as we receive it, possesses that literal totality of Catholic consent to which alone even the claim for infallibility attaches. Or if granting that the Creed is not of infallible authorship, they assert only that it is true,

* See Note (E).

i.e. expresses the true Catholic faith, and that to alter it, therefore, in the very least degree, implies a severance from Catholic unity; they have to show that unity of faith is necessarily the same thing with literal identity of creed; so completely and absolutely the same thing that the least variation of verbal expression necessarily implies loss of unity. If this be so, we must be prepared to admit that Western Christendom is no longer at one with the ancient Catholic Church, inasmuch as without Catholic consent it has altered the Nicene Creed by the addition of the Filioque clause; and we must further admit that previous to the first general Council the Church had no true unity of Faith, inasmuch as all the different local Churches—though agreeing in the substance of the Faith—did not express that faith in literally identical Creeds. But if we are not prepared to say this, then we must, I think, admit that less than Catholic consent may warrant the alteration even of the Creed of a general Council; and that a Church local, by such alteration, does not necessarily sever herself from Catholic unity—provided always, that the alteration does not amount to the corruption or denial of any article of the faith, in the oneness of which, and not in the exact and literal identity of the terminology in which it is expressed, true Catholic unity consists.

Be this, however, as it may, it is at least clear that our Church asserts for herself the right to alter the Creeds, when she declares, as her only reason for receiving them, that “they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture.” In these words her assent, and, therefore, the continuance of it, is conditioned on one thing, and one thing only—her conviction of the agreement of these Creeds with Scripture. Her right to assent on the ground of Scriptural proof, clearly implies her right to dissent on the ground of Scriptural disproof. Unless, indeed, we maintain that, having once assented to the Creeds on the ground of their accordance with Holy Writ, she may never reconsider this assent; an assertion which could only be justified on the ground that the Church of England not only claims to be, but is, infallible—which certainly will not be alleged by those who deny her right to deal with the Creeds. Of course, it is another and a very different question whether she should ever attempt to exercise the right she thus claims. Like all other rights, this can only be exercised under penalties for the misuse of it; under most tremendous penalties in the case of the Creeds. Nevertheless, she does most distinctly claim this right. She does, by implication, most distinctly assert, that in her capacity of guardian for her children of the Faith—which is not necessarily the same thing with being guardian of the Creeds—she has the right, though at her own peril, to modify the Creeds, or any part of them, as God’s word shall seem to her to require.

Assuming, however, that the Church of England possesses the right to deal with the Athanasian Creed, there still remains, as I

have just said, that other and far different question, whether there be any *sufficient* reason why she should do so. I say sufficient reason, because I do most deeply feel, with the defenders of this Creed, that it is not a light thing for our Church to meddle with a confession of faith so ancient, so justly dear to thousands of her most faithful and devoted members ; and, that the onus, therefore, lies on those who advocate any change, to show not only that there is some reason—nay, even that there are many and weighty reasons for the change—but that these are more and weightier than those that may be urged against it. This is really the question we have to decide, and a most difficult and anxious one it is—a question so difficult and anxious, that I for one could earnestly have wished that it had not been raised in our day. But now that it has been raised, now that we must meet it with such measure of wisdom and courage as God may vouchsafe us, I feel just as strongly that we can only deal with it safely in a spirit of strictest faithfulness, each one of us, to our own convictions, leaving the issue to Him who has brought His Church through graver perils and sorer difficulties than this.

Before stating, however, the reasons which appear to me to call for some change in the use or the wording of this Creed, let me first state, that there are reasons given for change with which I have no sympathy whatever. I can see no reasonableness in the objections that are urged against the Creed, on the ground either of the mysteriousness of its subject matter, or the subtlety of its definitions, or the alleged obsolescence of the heresies it denounces. As to mystery, it is of the essence of the Faith. The subject of the Faith is God, and of Him we cannot speak at all without uttering mysteries. That God is One is a proposition as truly mysterious as the proposition that He is Three in One. And if ever the Deist were to attempt to compose a Creed which should exclude, what for him are the heresies of Pantheism and Atheism, he could only do so by definitions far more subtle than those by which we fence the doctrine of the Trinity. The subtlety of these definitions is the necessary result of the subtlety of the heresies they oppose. These definitions are subtle and intricate, much in the same way that the thorns of a fence are thick-set and sharp ; it is only those who strive to break into, or out of, the fence who feel their sharpness. As to obsolete heresies, the heresies defined in the Creed are not obsolete, not even in England, to say nothing of those other countries in which the Anglican Church recites it. On the contrary, I fear that we might find amongst those who believe themselves perfectly orthodox, no small number of Tritheists, Sabelians, and Apollinarians. Most precious, therefore, do I believe each one of the great dogmatic definitions of this Creed to be ; and most deeply should I regret the loss to our Church of so great a safeguard of the Catholic Faith, which would result from her

ceasing to repeat these in her public Services. Nor, again, can I agree with the objection that this Creed is uncharitable because it warns us of the peril of unbelief. On the contrary, I hold most firmly that man's responsibility for his belief is as clearly taught in Scripture as his responsibility for his conduct, and that to warn him of this responsibility is to warn him not only truly but charitably. I am as strongly opposed as the most strenuous defenders of this Creed can be, to the heresy of indifferentism which would remove from our Faith that element of holy and loving severity, which no false charity should ever induce us to surrender or to weaken.

Nor lastly do I think that a change should be made in the use of the Creed, simply because its use is distasteful to very many members of our Church. It is not the first duty of the Church to *please* her children. It is her first duty to *teach* them, and to teach them all of Divine truth she knows, and that whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. And I cannot, therefore, too strongly deprecate the attempts that are being made to influence the decision of this question by threats, on one side or the other, of what certain members of our Church will do, if it be not decided exactly in the way they desire. Threats, for instance, on the one hand, of "the Laity taking the matter into their own hands," if their demands are not promptly complied with; and on the other hand, of secession, or of "joining the Liberation Society," if they are. Such threats in the columns of newspapers seem to savour more of political agitation than of christian counsel and deliberation. Certainly, had the Church feared like threats in times past, we never should have had the Creeds.

Let us hope, too, that our Church may not be influenced in her deliberations on this question by a consideration which has been much urged of late, namely, that if we once begin to touch this Creed there is no saying where we may stop. If we alter the Athanasian Creed, it is said, why not the Nicene? Why not the Apostles' Creed? If we touch the damnatory clauses, shall we ultimately retain even those which assert the Trinity and the Incarnation? Have those who thus speak utterly forgotten our Lord's promise to be with His Church always, even to the end of the world? Do they realize the fact that He is with us now in this nineteenth century, as truly and as closely present as He was with His Church in the fourth, or in the sixth, or in any other century? And if He be so present, why should we fear to trust Him with the future of His own Church? Why should we fear that if in faithfulness to the light He gives us we seek more truly to define, or better to guard, the Faith He has entrusted to us, we shall be punished for our faithfulness by being suffered to wander into all error instead of being guided, as He has promised we shall be, into all truth? Let us take care that in our dread of the heresies denounced in this Creed, we do not fall into one of the most

perilous of all heresies—the practical denial of the living, guiding, guarding presence of our Lord with His Church now as well as in past times, hereafter as well as now.

One consideration, and one only, will I trust be allowed by our Church ultimately to decide this question, and it is this: Is every sentence, is every phrase, in this creed, not only true; but truth expressed in its truest and best form? If so "*Cadit questio*," there is no longer room for considerations of expediency or of charity. Truth, however stern or severe it may seem to be, is the highest charity, and its fullest proclamation the truest expediency. If, however, the Church, after due and calm deliberation, should be led to the conclusion that any sentence in this Creed is either not true, or is truth so imperfectly or unguardedly expressed as to lead to error, then I pray that she may have the courage and the faithfulness to her trust, to alter or remove that sentence, spite of all threats or warnings of consequences on the one side or the other.

As regards the truth of this Creed, our Church clearly stands pledged to it by her eighth Article. And so do all those who have subscribed that Article, so long as it remains unaltered and so long as they retain the offices which they have obtained on condition of that subscription—a fact which, if any of us had been tempted to forget, we have been abundantly reminded of lately. The question, however, is not whether the doctrines set forth in this Creed are true, and may be proved so "by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture;" but whether they in every instance set forth truth in its clearest and truest form; whether, for instance, from original ambiguity of expression, from the context in which they stand, from the insensible change in the meaning of words which comes with lapse of time and is inherent in human speech, some of the expressions in this Creed do not appear to mean that which cannot "be proved by Holy Writ," to be "necessary to salvation." To say that this is so, is perfectly consistent with affirming the substantial truth of the doctrines contained in the Creed. Is there one of us teachers and preachers who has not had occasion to say of some statement,—his own or another's—There is a sense in which this is undoubtedly true and is capable of being proved from the Bible, and yet it seems to me harshly and crudely expressed; it is almost certain, unless guarded and qualified somewhat, to be misunderstood and to do mischief; it might be better expressed thus or thus, or might even be better omitted from its present context, which tends to obscure and pervert its meaning? Surely, if we may say this of our own or one another's teaching without thereby affirming the falsehood of what we thus censure, the Church may lawfully say, and we may lawfully ask her to say this, if need be, of her teachings, while yet we admit and affirm those teachings to be in their substance true.

Is it, then, the fact that there are certain expressions in the Athanasian Creed, which make it appear to affirm "as necessary to Salvation" more than Scripture warrants? Certainly no one will deny that there are a very large number of persons who are firmly persuaded that there are such. What these persons say is this. We are required when we recite the Athanasian Creed to say; first, that except a man "do keep the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled"—"whole," that is, without the loss of the minutest part; "undefiled," that is, without the intrusion of any, even the slightest error,—he shall "without doubt perish everlastingly."* Next, we are required to affirm, that the Catholic faith consists in a series of propositions which are set forth at great length and with great minuteness of detail, ending with this affirmation, which, coming at the end of them all, seems to include each and every one of these propositions: "This is the Catholic Faith; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

It seems to us, therefore, that inasmuch as any one who denies or imperfectly apprehends any one of these propositions, has not kept the Faith whole or undefiled, every such person "cannot be saved." That is to say, we are required to affirm, not only of the Nestorian, Eutychian, Apollinarian, but of those who deny, or who do not rightly receive the doctrine of the Double Procession, of Christ's descent into hell, of the resurrection of the bodies of the dead, or of everlasting punishment,—nay, of those who do not believe faithfully the damnatory clauses which are a part of this Creed, and, therefore, of the Catholic Faith—that is to say, all those who do not believe that certain other persons cannot be saved—that such cannot themselves be saved; and this, "without doubt," without there being any room even for that doubtful hope which might leave such persons to the uncovenanted mercies of God.

Now, I do not affirm—I am as far as possible from affirming—that those who say this are right in all this their interpretation of the Creed; I am only stating the simple and undeniable fact that hundreds and thousands of persons do persistently affirm this to be, for them, the most obvious and most natural meaning of the words of the Creed. And what is more, that they affirm this, after they have heard all the explanations and qualifications which are offered by those who maintain that this is neither its true nor its most obvious meaning. When you have told them that the Church in the Creed "pronounces, and means to pronounce no judgment on individuals;" that the damnatory clauses are only "general warnings of the peril of unbelief," and mean no more than such general warnings mean in Holy Scripture, and that if we

* Surely this sentence is a sentence of condemnation on individuals, though it is not a final sentence on any particular individual. "*Quis*" is a person, and not a doctrine; and yet we are told that "the Church in this Creed only condemns doctrines, not individuals."

accept these we cannot refuse to accept those ; that the words "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," mean only, without doubt he belongs to a class of persons who are in danger of perishing everlastingly ; that the words, "this is the Catholic Faith," apply only to certain propositions in the Creed, which are of the essence of the Faith, and not to certain others which are merely expositions of it and which properly should be enclosed in a parenthesis ; when all this has been said, their answer is, all that you say may be true ; it may be that the Creed should be read with all these qualifications and explanations that you supply, though some of them appear to us subtle and far-fetched, and some of them even questionable ; it may be, that with the help of these, the Creed may yield the sense you give it. All we say is, that still this does not seem to us its most obvious and literal sense ; it is not that sense which nine out of ten who recite it, attach to it. And if this be its true sense, it is much to be desired that it were expressed more clearly ; that those meanings, for instance, which you give to certain expressions in it, were substituted for them, and that we were not called on as we are now, to make a severe mental effort of theological reasoning and defining, before we can take the words in the sense in which you tell us they ought to be taken. Now, if it be the fact that hundreds and thousands of most attached members of our Church, are saying this, what is the sense of telling them that they are, one and all of them—including some of the most eminent, most learned and most pious of our clergy and laity—men as capable, certainly, of understanding the meaning of theological terms as their accusers—that they are one and all of them ignorant persons, perversely incapable of understanding the meaning of the plainest propositions ? Let us grant that they are so, and what does that prove ? Simply this ; that there are expressions in this Creed so worded, as to be inevitably misunderstood by large numbers of those who are required to recite them ; that, spite of every explanation that can be offered, these words appear to these persons to have, as their first and most literal meaning, precisely that sense, which a large number of other persons affirm that they have not and cannot possibly have. Can there be put into words a stronger argument for considering, at least, whether these expressions—confessedly so generally misunderstood—are not ambiguously expressed, and might not be made to convey more clearly that meaning which all agree in saying that they ought to convey ? Surely, the more ignorant, and the more perverse they are, who, as it is alleged, thus misunderstand the Creed, the more reason there is in common charity, for not putting needless difficulties in the way of their ignorance or giving needless strength to their perversity. It is the blind, in whose path we are forbidden to cast stumbling blocks ; it is the lame, whom we are forbidden to turn out of the way.

This reason, however, for re-considering those expressions in the Athanasian Creed, which are thus, it is alleged, so generally misunderstood, becomes much stronger when we turn from the objections of those who, we are told, utterly misunderstand them, to the explanations of those who claim, not only truly to understand them, but to understand them in their only true and literal sense. Certainly, we should expect from such persons an explanation of these misinterpreted passages which should be, not only clear and definite, but unanimous. Certainly, we should not expect to hear from them a great variety of explanations, differing and even contradictory. And yet this is exactly what we do hear. We find that the defenders of the integrity of the Creed, when they come to tell us what it really does mean, differ, not only as to the scope and intent of the damnatory clauses, but as to the meaning of nearly every word they contain. We are told, for instance, that "there is no *Anathema sit* in any of the Creeds:" and we are told, "that a Creed necessarily implies an anathema—tacit, if not express." We are told "that the damnatory clauses apply only to the rejection of certain fundamental doctrines in the Creed, and that the others, being introduced by way of argument and illustration, are not obligatory:" and we are told, that as Bishop Pearson says, "the 'I believe' of a creed is diffused through every article and proposition of it;" and again, "that the admonitory clauses are a plain confession that *whatever a Creed of the Church contains* is certainly and infallibly true, *to be accepted as the condition of a man's everlasting salvation.*" We are told that *ante omnia* means—before all things "in the order of time," and that it means—before all things in the order of necessity. We are told that *quicumque vult salvus esse*, means—"Who would be in the safest way," not that there may not be "other less safe ways;" and we are told that it means—"he who would be saved from eternal perdition;" and again, that it means—"he who values soundness of mind;" nay we are told, that *in æternum peribit* may mean, not that the unbeliever "shall perish everlastingly;" but that "the Catholic faith would, in that case, no doubt be lost to us for ever!" We are told that the admonitory clauses do not apply to cases of "involuntary ignorance or invincible prejudice;" and we are told that invincible prejudice may mean "an aggravated form of wickedness."

These are some of the differing and contradictory explanations of the damnatory clauses which I have gathered from a few only of the many pamphlets, sermons, and letters to which this controversy has given rise. How many more of these there may be I cannot say. I have cited enough to show that the meaning of these clauses is apparently so ambiguous that hardly any two of their most strenuous defenders can agree amongst themselves as to what they do mean. If, therefore, each one of these differing interpreters subscribes to them, as we are indignantly assured that

they do, in their strict and literal sense, it is clear that either the strict and literal meaning of these words is not perfectly obvious, or that they are so worded as to bear more than one obvious and strictly literal meaning. Surely, this again, is a strong, a very strong reason for considering whether language so variously interpreted may not be needlessly ambiguous, and may not be capable of clearer expression.

And if this clearer expression be possible, surely it is of all things most desirable; and that not merely because it is the duty of the Church to set forth the faith in the clearest and least ambiguous form possible, but because this ambiguity in the case of clauses so tremendous as these damnable clauses, necessarily gives rise to two great evils—sophistical and casuistical explanations of these clauses on the one hand, and a violent reaction against all dogma, on the other. When penalties so awful are attached to definitions so many and minute, and in words so capable either of exaggeration on the one hand, or of explanations which explain them away on the other, men are sorely tempted to take one or other of these courses, according to their dispositions. They have taken them, they are taking them now, and it is hard to say which of them is the most fatal to all true religion, endangering as they do, the one all dogma, and the other all morality. I do not say, that it may not be our duty to encounter this peril. We do and must encounter it, as regards some of the words of God, which being His words and not ours, we may not dare to alter, and which we believe He has left thus doubtful for reasons known only to Himself. But these words of the Athanasian Creed are not God's words, they are Man's words; and, therefore, before we accept, as regards them, this perilous alternative, we are clearly bound to see whether they may not be so expressed as to save us from it, or whether, if they cannot be so expressed, they are not better omitted.

We are told, however, that these words are not man's words, that they are no more and no other than our Lord's own words; that the judgment they pronounce is not the Church's, but His; that she may not, therefore, and dare not, alter them. The Church, we are told, in declaring to her children the necessity of holding the faith, ventures not to say other than "just what her Lord said"—"no less and no more."

Is this so? Are these damnable clauses just what our Lord said—no less and no more?

Literally, of course, it is not so. No such words as the damnable clauses were ever spoken by our Lord. To say that they are just what He said—no less and no more—is, therefore, one of those rhetorical amplifications too largely used in this controversy. All that it really means is, that the words are so exact and true an equivalent of our Lord's words, that they may be said to be His. This, however, to begin with, is a very bold thing to say of any

human words whatever. The moment that we substitute for the very words of Christ, words that we think equivalent to His, in that moment we introduce the possibility of human error and infirmity. It is, to say the least, possible, it is not too much to say even probable, that our words may not mean exactly what His meant. It is, therefore, presumptuous to say that they must necessarily be exactly the same, and not only presumptuous, but uncharitable in the last degree, to accuse all those who doubt whether they are the same—of a secret desire to deny His words.* Certainly, it appears to me nothing less than astounding that men should assert that, when our Lord said, “He that believeth not shall be damned,”† He necessarily meant, He that keepeth not whole and undefiled every one of the statements in the Athanasian Creed—He, for instance, that believeth not that “*as* the soul and flesh is one man, *so* God and Man is one Christ,” that is to say—he that denies, not the Incarnation, but the correctness of a particular illustration of the Incarnation,—“shall be damned”; and further, that our Lord’s words so necessarily and obviously mean “just this,” that to doubt this is to doubt His words.

But are the words of the damnatory clauses manifestly and obviously the exact equivalent of our Lord’s words? Is “not to keep the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled” the exact equivalent, or fair translation, of *ὁ ἀπιστεύσας*? Is “without doubt he shall perish everlastingly” the exact equivalent, or a fair rendering, of *κατακριθήσεται*?

To me they seem to be not merely not the equivalent of these words, but not even a true inference from them. When our Lord says—“He that believeth not, shall be condemned,” He does not say expressly what is that, the non-belief of which entails condemnation. This is to be inferred from the context. When, therefore, we claim His authority for the damnatory clauses, we say, in effect, this: We conclude from the context in which these words stand, that they mean—he that believeth not every article in the Athanasian Creed, shall perish everlastingly. Observe, we take, here, as it were, one step away from our Lord’s own words, we have now got into the region of human, and, therefore, fallible inference. But is this a necessary inference from His words? Very far from it, as it seems to me. Our Lord—sending out His Apostles to preach the Gospel to the heathen, as the means and condition of salvation, says—“He that believeth”—*what? This Gospel*—“and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not”—*what?* The same Gospel—“shall be condemned.”

* See Note (F).

† I have assumed in this argument that these words were spoken by our Lord. If they were not, I fully grant that there are other passages in Scripture quite as strongly worded as this.

The Gospel was the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and those who accept this Gospel, that is, who believe in Him as their Saviour, and are Baptised, He tells us "shall be saved." Baptism implies belief in the Name into which men are baptised. Clearly, then, according to our Lord's own statement, belief in the Trinity, and acceptance of Christ as the Saviour of the sinner, are the conditions of Salvation under the new Covenant. And he that refuses these so utterly that he will not accept the Gospel and therefore will not be baptised, he, that is, who so utterly rejects Christianity that he will not become a Christian, he must be condemned. That is to say, our Lord's words, taken in their context, seem to apply, primarily, not to those within, but to those who, being without, refuse to come within the Church; and secondarily, by inference, to those who, having come within the Church, so far apostatize from the faith as that they could not—believing no more than they do—have been admitted to Baptism.

Now, if this be the meaning of our Lord's words, then so far from the damnatory clauses being either just what He said, or a necessary inference from what He said, they would be as nearly as possible the converse of what He said—His words applying primarily to those without; the damnatory clauses primarily to those within, the Church—His words affixing a penalty to rejection of all the Faith; the damnatory clauses affixing it to the loss of any, even the least part of it. In a word, the difference between the clauses and His words seems to me to be, that they affix to *misbelief*, even in the least degree, the penalty which He affixes to *unbelief* in the greatest degree.

Now, I am far from asserting that the interpretation I have just given for our Lord's words is certainly the true one. I only say that it is a perfectly possible interpretation of them, and that until not only this but every interpretation of our Lord's words, other than that given in the damnatory clauses, is shown to be untenable, we have no right to say that the damnatory clauses are "just what He said," no less and no more.

But we shall be told that misbelief concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation is really unbelief; for this reason, that he who does not rightly believe all the truth concerning Christ's nature, is not really believing in Christ—that is, in the true and real Christ—but in a false Christ of his own devising, and, therefore, may truly be said "to believe not." But—not to insist on the point that there are articles in the Athanasian Creed which have no necessary connection with the doctrine either of the Trinity or the Incarnation, and yet which come within the scope of the damnatory clauses—I observe that we have here a new and distinct proposition, which does not so much as pretend to be an inference from our Lord's words. It is this: He who does not in all respects correctly apprehend the nature

of the Being in whom he believes does not truly believe in Him. He that doth not keep whole and undefiled the Catholic faith, does not correctly apprehend the nature of Christ. Therefore, he that does not keep whole and undefiled the Catholic Faith, does not truly believe in Christ.

Now, I will not ask whether this is just what our Lord said, or whether it is an inference, necessary or otherwise, from what He said, for it is clearly neither of these. But I ask, is this proposition so certainly and evidently true that we may not only found on it the assertion of the peril of perdition to large classes of men, but the accusation of covert unbelief against whosoever questions this proposition? Is it true at all? To me it seems to bear a sad resemblance to such propositions as these. He who denies God's sovereignty and pre-destinating decrees, does not rightly apprehend God's nature; therefore the Arminian who denies this does not truly believe in the true God, and, therefore, cannot be saved! Or this—The Calvinist who believes that God could create men for eternal perdition, does not believe in the true God, and, therefore, cannot be saved! Or—The true worship of God is essential to salvation: Roman Catholics who worship saints and angels do not truly worship God; therefore, no Roman Catholic can be saved! Have none of you, my Reverend Brethren, heard or met with arguments such as these, and in what respect do they differ from that which I have stated above? What are they, one and all, but so many assertions that he who does not believe all necessary deductions from any doctrine does not believe the doctrine itself, or, in other words, that misbelief is always unbelief, and that the warnings attaching to the one attach necessarily to the other. Misbelief is not unbelief. It differs from it essentially in this, that it admits of degrees; the other does not. All *unbelief* is sin, and is equally sin, whatever be the subject-matter of it; it is not a mistake, it is a *crime*; it is that hardening of the heart and contempt of God's word, which not only ends in, but is, eternal death. Misbelief is not necessarily sin at all; it is a mistake and not a crime; it may, of course, lead on to unbelief, and here is its greatest peril; it always entails spiritual loss of some kind, and here is its necessary penalty; but it is not unbelief, nor does the penalty for unbelief attach to it.

But we shall be told—how often are we told—that this is all that the damnable clauses really do mean; that they do not condemn misbelief *as such*, but only where it is complicated with unbelief; that is to say, only where it is “wilful rejection of the Catholic Faith against light and knowledge.” On this I have to observe, in the first place, that I am utterly unable to reconcile it with the plea made for the first clause in the Creed—*Quicumque vult salvus esse*,—which we are told is “a declaration by the Church of the condition on which Almighty God grants salvation,” namely, “correct faith in all who can have it;” and that the Church in these

words declares "that the only way of salvation she knows is the Catholic Faith." If so, then, surely, he who is out of that way is equally out of it, whether he has strayed from it or has deliberately left it. Surely, if a certain medicine be absolutely essential to the recovery of a patient, he must, humanly speaking, as certainly die for want of taking it, whether he wilfully refuse it or whether he mistake some other for it.

If, however, this be the real meaning of these clauses, then it is most unfortunate that they should so utterly fail to express it. There is no word in any one of them which so much as implies that wilful unbelief, and that only, is the peril against which they warn us. "Wilful rejection of the Catholic Faith" is neither the obvious nor the literal, nor even the necessarily implied meaning of "not keeping it whole and undefiled." Most certainly it is not one of those "qualifications with which all general propositions must be understood," and which "each person may and must be trusted to make for himself." It is a distinct and separate theological proposition, arbitrarily added to these words in order to qualify them, and neither necessarily implied in them nor to be inferred from them. Is it, then, too much to ask, that if the clauses are intended to mean this they should be so altered as to say this and this only, clearly and distinctly? Can there be a stronger condemnation of a minatory clause, than that it fails so much as to allude to that one peril against which it is specially intended to warn us?

Furthermore, if these clauses are directed only against wilful unbelief then they are doubly misleading; because not only do they omit all mention of that unbelief against which they ought to warn us, but, standing as they do in closest connection with a long series of definitions of misbelief, they naturally and inevitably cause the impression that it is the things which *are* mentioned, and not that which is *not* mentioned, against which we are to be on our guard—that is to say, they divert the mind from the greater peril of an unbelieving heart to the far lesser peril of a misbelieving understanding. While, on the other hand, the qualification that only wilful *unbelief* is condemned by the clauses, tends to obscure the real though lesser peril of *misbelief*. In a word, these clauses, in their present wording and context, mean either too much or too little. Too much, if we take them as, what they seem to be, warnings against misbelief only; too little, if we take them, as what we are told they really are, warnings only against wilful unbelief.

Lastly; assuming that these clauses are only the very words of our Lord, it is not correct to say, that *in the context in which they stand* they are only general warnings against unbelief. They are general warnings with a particular application added—namely, a list of certain classes or categories of errors, every one of which is

asserted to come within the scope of these clauses. They are general clauses, therefore, only in the sense in which the major proposition of a syllogism is general, in order that from it may be deduced by the help of the minor, a particular conclusion. They are general in the sense in which the words of a Statute are general until limited and applied by the interpretation clauses. When we say, "he that hath not the Son, hath not life," we assert a general proposition. But when we add to this, as we have seen we must add to it, this minor proposition, The Nestorian and the Eutychian, and he that denies the Double Procession, or the descent into Hell, or the resurrection of our bodies, "hath not the Son," we necessarily arrive at the particular conclusion, such persons "have not life." It is, therefore, simply idle to talk only of the general warnings of Scripture, when we place these warnings in a context, in which they necessarily cease to be general, and become special and particular. And let me add on this point, that what really needs proof, in the above syllogism, is not its major premise, on which so much superfluous demonstration has been wasted, but the minor; namely, that the Nestorian, or the Eutychian, or the Apollinarian, or he who denies the descent into hell, or the resurrection of our bodies, "hath not the Son." For this I should like to see some more cogent proof than has yet been brought. Certainly, it is not to be found in the way in which it is generally attempted; namely, by first quoting from Scripture general warnings of the peril of unbelief, and then by proving that each of these heresies is unscriptural, or that the contradictory truth is scriptural. For what is to be proved is not that these heresies are unscriptural, but that they are errors of that kind and degree to which Scripture attaches the warning of perdition; or, in other words, what we have to show is not that every statement in the Creed is Scriptural, but that every one of them is necessary to salvation.* Nothing, therefore, can be more inaccurate or unfair, than to accuse those who doubt whether every one of the errors condemned in the Creed is necessarily fatal to eternal life, or whether every one of the doctrines stated in it is essential to eternal life, with denying that correct faith is essential to salvation. He who questions, for instance, whether belief in our Lord's descent into hell, or belief that His resurrection took place on the third day after His death and not on the second, is necessary to eternal life, no more denies that these statements are correct, or that correct faith is essential to eternal life, than he who questions whether meat is a necessary of life denies that meat is food or that food is a necessary of life.† Or, to use another illustration, he who takes exception to the charge of a judge, who has ruled that a certain case of homicide amounts to wilful murder, certainly thereby,

* See Note (G).

† See Note (H).

neither asserts that there is no such offence as wilful murder, nor yet that murder ought not to be capitally punished, nor yet that the homicide in question was not an offence; he only questions whether this particular offence amounted to the crime of wilful murder. And certainly, it were a strange defence of the judge's charge to say that he had done the criminal no injury by his ruling, inasmuch as the jury had acquitted him, and that even had they not done so, it still lay in the power of the sovereign to pardon him. The answer I imagine to such a defence, if we could conceive its being made, would be, that whether he had or had not done harm to the criminal, he certainly had done grievous harm to the law, by giving an incorrect and therefore an illegal definition of it.

And now to sum up this discussion.—If it be true that there are expressions in the Athanasian Creed, dealing with the most awful and distressing of subjects,—the conditions of eternal salvation,—which by the confession of their most strenuous defenders are not only very generally, but very perilously misunderstood; and if these same sentences are, by those who most insist on their importance, most variously and oppositely interpreted; if they are confessedly, not the exact words of Scripture, but interpretations and inferences from Scripture; if they can only be brought within the limits of Scriptural statement by explanations and qualifications which are not all of them either self-evident or necessarily implied in the wording of those sentences, and which to many seem difficult and subtle, if not actually unsound; if they appear to thousands of Churchmen, either not to convey at all, or most imperfectly to convey, the truth they are said to be designed to teach; and if their apparent meaning causes deepest pain and distress to many, not merely of the ignorant, but the most learned, most devout, and most pious members of our Church, is it so very “immoral” a thing to ask that these words be re-considered by our Church? Is there after all any such utter “profligacy” in asking whether justice, charity, wisdom, and, above all, faithfulness to the cause of dogmatic truth itself, may not require that they should be re-considered?

Surely, there is neither wisdom, nor charity, nor justice in meeting such a plea as this, simply with an obstinate *non possumus*, or worse still, simply with fierce denunciations of all who urge it, as ignorant or dishonest traitors to the Faith. Who, let me ask, best show their love and reverence for the great dogmas of our Faith? Those, who accepting every word of these dogmas implicitly and explicitly, desire to remove what they know to be a most serious practical hindrance to others doing the same? Or those, who refusing so much as to touch, or even to entertain the idea of touching with their little fingers this heavy burden, insist on presenting these dogmas in their harshest and most questionable aspect, and thereby provoking against them a reaction which

may tell, which is telling, most seriously on the Christian Faith? For myself, I am neither ashamed nor afraid to take my place amongst those who plead for the alteration of these clauses; or, if alteration be impossible, for the removal of them from the Creed, of which they are no essential part, and in which their presence as they stand and where they stand, is a real peril to our Church and to Christianity itself. Satisfied I am that such dealing with the Creed, as I believe it to be the truest, is also the safest and most conservative. At least I know of no other way of dealing with it, which does not appear to me open to far graver objections than this.

An explanatory Rubric seems to me, while it is virtually an alteration of the Creed, to have this fault of its own; that, being an alteration in the form of a gloss while the text is left unaltered, instead of relieving the difficulty as to the meaning of the text, it only adds to this another difficulty, by requiring all men to accept not merely the dogma in the text, but the dogma of the gloss, whatever that may be; and with it the additional dogma that this gloss is really the true meaning of the text, whether it seem to them to be so or not; a proceeding which, however charitably intended, is really in the last degree arbitrary and tyrannical, and which, as regards a Creed, is an intolerable invasion of Christian liberty. Certainly I have seen no explanatory Rubric or Synodical declaration, which did not appear to me, so far as I could pretend to understand it, infinitely harder of acceptance than any one of the damnatory clauses.

Hardly less objectionable is the solution of an optional use, which at present finds much general acceptance. This proposal seems to me vicious in principle, unfair in operation, and ineffectual for the purpose for which it is designed. It is vicious in principle; because it makes the preferences of the congregation or of the minister the measure of the Church's duty. If this Creed be, as it is alleged, not only truth, but truth in its most perfect form, then it is the most vital and important of all truth—truth concerning the essential conditions of eternal life. Truth, therefore, which of all others the Church should proclaim on the house-tops; and truth, moreover, which they who dislike most, for that very reason, evidently most need to have proclaimed to them. To propose that its use should be optional, seems to me as preposterous, as to propose that the lighting of a beacon should be optional with the light-keeper, or that the friends of a patient, for whom a physician has prescribed the one and only medicine which can save him, should be told, that although the dislike of the medicine was actually an indication of the dangerous nature of the disease it was to cure, yet that they need not administer it, if the patient showed a strong dislike to it! If on the other hand, the Creed is not truth in its best form of expression, why not alter the wording of it, so as to remove all reasonable scruples as to its use? In the next place; optional use is unfair in operation,

because it devolves on each individual clergyman the invidious and difficult task of deciding—what, in that case, the Church would not have had the courage to decide for Herself—whether this Creed should or should not be read. How is he to decide this? By the vote of his congregation? And if so, is it to be by that of the majority of the congregation, or of those whom he deems the wisest or the most influential members of it? By the wish of the Squire against the people, or of the people against the Squire? And for how long is this doctrinal *plebiscite* to hold good? For one year, or more, or less? How often is the parish to be agitated by this Athanasian Creed controversy, and divided into Athanasian and anti-Athanasian factions, wrangling fiercely about the most sacred mysteries of the Faith? Is it fair or wise to leave the settlement of such questions as these to the courage or the discretion of every individual clergyman amongst 20,000? But if the option lie, not in the congregation, but in the breast of the clergyman only, it will be ineffectual to afford relief to conscience. How, for instance, will it meet the case of a congregation disliking the use of the Creed, and a clergyman insisting on using it; or a clergyman disliking the use, and a congregation claiming it? Will not the option—that is, the personal choice and will of the clergyman—in every case, be just the very thing which will make the use or non-use of the Creed most galling and irritating to those who differ from him as to its use or non-use? Will congregations, who now complain that the Creed is imposed upon them, by the law of the Church, like it any the better, when it is imposed upon them by the mere will or caprice of the clergyman? Will those laymen who demand that its use, “exactly as it is, and where it is,” be carefully preserved to them, be better pleased to have this denied to them, not by the voice of the Church, but by the voice of a single presbyter? I must say, that if I were asked to name a device for dealing with the Creed, which combined the minimum of relief with the maximum of risk, I should say that it was this of the optional use.

And if I deprecate the adoption of this optional use by the Church, still more earnestly do I deprecate its enactment by the State, without the previous assent of the Church. The Creeds, formularies, and rubrics of our Church as they now stand, are the bases of the existing concordat between the Church and the State. Neither party has morally, nor according to the spirit, if not the letter, of the laws of the Church and State, legally the right to alter these without the consent of the other. To do so seems to me a violation of the original compact, which is dangerous to its existence. The change in this case might be of the very smallest, might even supposably be in itself desirable, and yet might involve a great principle, and that all the more perilously, just because the smallness of the change might blind men to the greatness of the principle involved.

What then, you will ask me, is it that I counsel in this present distress, if I thus deprecate the most popular compromise yet proposed, as well as what seems the simplest and most ready way of giving to that compromise legal validity? My advice may seem, I fear, a very tame one, and utterly contemptible to the more valiant and eager spirits of our day. It is simply *patience*. The mind of the Church, deeply agitated as it is by such a question somewhat suddenly pressed upon it, needs time to inform and to express itself more fully, more deliberately, than it has yet been able to do. The first words of such a controversy as this are not generally the wisest, nor the first aspects of it the clearest. May we not hope that further and fuller discussion may lead to a better understanding of one another's real views and purposes; may tend to soften passions, and allay fears on either side; may lead, in short, to that calmer and more charitable temper, in which alone we can hope to have the blessing of the Spirit of God upon our debates? When, for instance, candid and Christian men, on both sides of this dispute, come to understand, on the one hand, that the desire for some change in the Creed does not necessarily imply lack of faith; and, on the other hand, that the desire to retain it unchanged comes from no lack of charity; when they can see that the dogmas of the Faith, and the love without which that Faith is profitless, are equally dear to the combatants on both sides; that the question between them is not one that touches the essence of the Faith, only the manner in which the Church shall commend the Faith to the acceptance of her children—may we not hope that they may find some way of settling this grave question, better, happier, safer than that of either party taking the matter hastily and peremptorily “into their own hands,” and forcing their solution of it on their opponents. The best, the most logical solution of this difficulty, were dearly bought at such a price as this. If we must come to a struggle, a victory, a schism at the last, so be it, and God show the right! But surely we need not precipitate it; surely, we are bound to do all we can to avert it. Six months is not so very long a period to give for the consideration of the use of a Creed which has been in use in our Church for nearly twice as many centuries; that those who have borne with it all their lives must rush to Parliament next session to demand, at any risk, their immediate deliverance from it. Nor, on the other hand, is this period so ample for deliberation, that at the end of it those who desire to keep the Creed unchanged should have no other answer to the pleadings—the honest, earnest, distressful pleadings—of thousands of their brethren, than this: we will not hear you plead another word; nothing that you can ever say will in the least change our minds, the Creed shall remain as it is and where it is, now and for ever.

Once more then I venture to counsel a little longer patience, a

little, nay, a great deal more of counsel and conference, before we attempt to come to a final decision on a question so important and so difficult. The outside world will, of course, in that case have its scoff at our indecision and our timidity. Politicians, whose first maxim it is, not to legislate on any question of importance for the State before public opinion has ripened on it, may have their sneer at those who wish to legislate on like conditions for the Church. We are not, however, greatly concerned to please such critics. The peace of the Church, nay, the spiritual interests of the very humblest of her members, are of infinitely greater importance to Her than a wilderness of newspaper articles.

Nor, do I believe, that the longer discussion of this question would necessarily be so hurtful to the Church that we must needs hastily shut it up in some one conclusion or other. On the contrary, I believe that it may be God's will that this discussion, as to the terms of our Faith and the conditions of our salvation, may have the effect of turning the mind of the Church, in these days of lax belief and daring unbelief, to the deeper consideration of those fundamental verities of the Christian Faith which she holds in trust for the world; may be leading us to weigh, to prove, to grasp once more with a firmer grasp, each one of those great dogmas which the Creed defines; to ascertain more clearly and definitely, if possible, what are the true relations between belief and salvation. As each party in this dispute insists, the one on the infinite importance of the Faith *in* which we believe, and the other on the infinite importance of the faith *by* which we believe, may we not hope that the weapons, rusted somewhat perhaps, from disuse, which are thus being taken down and sharpened afresh for the present conflict, may yet hang side by side in their renewed keenness and brightness, in the armoury of the Church, ready for use against the common enemy?

Let us hope that it may be so. For these are times in which the Church can ill afford to lose one weapon from her armoury, one soldier from her ranks. In all her long struggle with "the evil that is in the world," never did she more need all her united energies than she does at this moment. The kingdom of darkness seems in our day to have had its season of special revival corresponding to that of the kingdom of light. Its forces, as they gather from all sides to the assault upon the city of God, seem animated by a keener spirit, both of hate and of hope. The cold sneering Deism of the last century, cold as the orthodoxy that it combated; the more earnest, and at first, more reverent scepticism of the earlier part of this century—which, if anti-Christian in its doubts, was still religious in its aspirations—are fast giving place to an active aggressive hostility to all Religion, and especially to Christianity, as the *prava superstitio* which is the chief hindrance to the "progress of humanity" towards the millenium of materialism. And this speculative atheism, this spiritual

wickedness, animated as it is by a passionate and fanatical hatred to Christ and to His faith, is reviving and strengthening its old alliance with the practical godlessness, the mere brute materialism of our fallen nature, which hates Religion as it hates Law, as it hates Society itself, because these are but so many forms of restraint on the appetites and the passions of the animal man. The war cry of the Pantheist, the Atheist, and the Secularist, "Let there be no God," is being answered by the cry of the multitude, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And as these join their forces for the assault on our Zion, what is it that animates them most with hopes of success? It is this, that from our camp they hear, not the answering war-song of a united host, but the voices of fratricidal strife; the very Temple ringing, as of old, with the battle-cries of the parties that strive for its exclusive possession, forgetful of their common enemy at the gates. No wonder that they promise themselves an easy victory! No wonder that they tell us that no assault of theirs is needed for our overthrow; that they have but to wait, and this discordant and distracted Christianity must perish of its own dissensions! Is it so? Must it be so? Must it be, that our unhappy divisions shall at once encourage our enemies, and banish from amongst us our only true defence—the presence of the Prince of Peace? Must it be, that for us, too, there shall be heard at last, the awful "Let us depart hence!" which shall leave the Temple of our Faith a deserted shrine, no longer defensible, because we shall have made it no longer worth defending? Or shall the presence of a common danger rouse us, one and all, to the sense of a common duty, and a common Faith? Shall the fierce and still fiercer attacks that are being made on Christianity itself draw, ere it is too late, nearer to each other all Christian men?

Shall it be that as thus we draw our ranks closer and closer still around the innermost citadel of our Faith, we shall see, more clearly still, that which it enshrines—a Cross, and a Grave. A cross on which hung the Saviour whose last prayer was that His disciples might be one—a grave from which streamed forth, on the day of the Resurrection, that light of life in which, and by which, we all may be one. A cross on which we might learn to crucify the carnal affections, the pride, the self-love, the self-will from which spring so many of our contentions—a grave in which we might agree to bury the folded and forgotten swathings of our party divisions. A cross which if we could but agree to lift up, but for one hour, with united hands, might once more draw all men unto Him who died upon it—a grave from which, if we could but bend over it with united gaze of adoring love, we should draw such "power of His Resurrection" as would enable us to raise the world's dead to life.

It may be that this shall be the blessing we shall win from our encounter with the perils of these perilous times. Cheaply pur-

chased it would surely be, by greater dangers, by far sorer trials than any that have yet fallen to our lot; nay, by sufferings and persecutions even, such as may be in store for the Church in times less distant than perhaps we like to think. That it may be so, that the ark of the Lord, borne by our weak and often trembling hands into the battle of our day, fall not into the possession of His enemies, let us strive and pray each one of us. For we have each of us his share in determining the result. The faith and the life of the Church is but the sum of the faith and the life that is in each one of her members. The prayers and the labours, the hopes and the fears, the successes and the failures of every one of us, are telling every one of them on the issues of this great struggle.

As you separate from this our place of meeting, to return to the posts assigned you, by the Captain of our Salvation, you go to enter once more into a combat to which your whole lives have been, by your own free choice, devoted, and which demands from you all of courage and wisdom, all of self-denial and energy you possess. As you go forth again to war with ignorance, crime, vice, sorrow, suffering—sin in all its varied forms, what word can I, who have been called under God, to lead, to counsel, to exhort you in this fight—what word of warning more solemn, of encouragement more cheering, can I speak to you or to myself, than this, we are *Cross-bearers!* The Standard that we bear aloft into the strife still bears its old inscription, *In hoc signo vinces*. But the Cross which we thus uplift, we must first have, borne for ourselves. The Christ we preach, we must first have known as our own Saviour. If we thus preach and thus live, then, where we found our first strength, there shall we find its constant renewal. For the daily toil of our daily task, with all its disheartening weariness, its trying disappointments, its depressing sense of comparative failure; for the greater conflicts, too, and trials of our ministry, with their sudden pressure of unforeseen difficulties, their sharper anxieties, their keener hopes and fears; for all these there is one, and but one, never-failing source of comfort and of help, one place alone where we may renew our strength—it is at the foot of the Cross. There, as we kneel and pray—there, as we kneel and hope—there, as we kneel and vow—as we offer ourselves once more, in the love of our hearts, in the labour of our lives, as willing sacrifices unto God—will there come into our hearts the peace, born, not of ease and comfort but of a death agony of fear and yet of faith, the peace which came of the vision, seen from afar, of the accomplished travail of the soul of Him who died to win it for us. And with that peace will come the strength it gives, the strength of a heart at one with God, strong in its resolve to do or to suffer His Holy will, asking of Him but one thing, to be better taught what that will may be.

I pray for you, my dear and Reverend Brethren; I ask your prayers for me, that more and more of this peace, of this strength

may be ours ; that our crucified and risen Lord may fill us more and more with the spirit of His Cross, and with the Might of His Resurrection. So that having done, in His Name, and for His sake, the task He has given us to do ; our day's work ended ; our shortcomings, our mistakes, our sins in the doing of it, forgiven of His infinite mercy ; our successes owned and rewarded of His not less infinite goodness ; we may, each in his appointed time, enter into the rest and the joy of our Lord.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

Analysis of Returns to Visitation Queries.

Number of Churches from which Returns were made, 533.

Churches having service on any week-days	252
Churches having daily service	36
Churches having service on Ascension Day	378
Churches having Holy Communion less frequently than once a month	187
Churches having Holy Communion weekly...	33
Churches having collections for Foreign and Home Missions	391
Churches restored since last Visitation	77
Churches built or rebuilt since last Visitation	12
Total amount of voluntary contributions for Church Building and Restoration	£149,000
Parishes having no lay agency other than that of Sunday School Teachers	387
Parishes in which Parochial Councils exist	29
No. of Church Schools in the Diocese	542
<i>No. of Parishes from which no returns were made of number of Scholars</i>	70
No. of Scholars	46,410
No. of Sunday Schools...	491
<i>No. of Parishes from which no returns made of number of Scholars</i>	80
No. of Scholars	40,453
No. of Schools built or enlarged since last Visitation	105
Amount of voluntary contributions to these	£31,317
No. of Schools inspected by Government since passing of Education Act, 1871	388
No. of Schools respecting which reports have been received from Government Inspectors	276
No. accepted as Public Elementary Schools under the Act	224
No. of School Boards formed...	19
No. of Church Schools rented or assigned to School Boards	5

NOTE B.—The Compulsory Church Rates Abolition Act (31 and 32 Vict. c. 109) provides for the formation of "A Body of Trustees" who "may be appointed in any parish for the purpose of accepting by Bequest, Donation, Contract, or otherwise, and of holding any contributions which may be given to them for Ecclesiastical purposes in the parish.

The Trustees shall consist of the Incumbent and two householders, or owners, or occupiers of land in the parish, to be chosen in the first instance, and also from time to time, on any vacancy in the office by death, incapacity, or resignation, one by the patron and the other by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the parish is situate. The Trustees shall be a body corporate by the name of the Church Trustees of the parish to which they belong, having a perpetual succession and a common seal to sue and be sued in their corporate name.

The Trustees may, from time to time, as circumstances may require, pay over to the Churchwardens, to be applied by them either to the general Ecclesiastical purposes of the parish, or to any specific Ecclesiastical purposes of the parish, any funds in their hands. They may also invest in Government or Real Securities any funds in their hands, and accumulate the income thereof or otherwise deal with such funds as they think expedient, subject to the provisions of this Act. The Incumbent shall be the chairman of the Trustees.

NOTE C.—Were we to enter into a discussion of the theory of Catholic consent, as the infallible source of Dogma and Ritual, we would have to discuss the following questions :—

1. Whether it can be proved that our Lord's promise to his Church necessarily implies infallibility, and not rather indestructibility, immunity that is from perpetual error and not perpetual immunity from error?

2. Whether, granting that our Lord's words are a promise of infallibility, they guarantee this infallibility to general councils, that is to say, whether the promise that the Church universal shall never err necessarily means that a majority of a minority of her Bishops assembled under certain conditions shall never err?

3. And if so, whether there is any infallible definition of these conditions of infallibility; any infallible criteria, that is to say, by which a true general council may be distinguished from a council falsely claiming that title?

4. If the decrees of general councils depend for their validity upon Catholic consent, what is it that constitutes true Catholicity of consent. Whether it is that of the majority of Christians, or the absolute and literal totality of Christians all over the world?

5. Whether, on either of these suppositions, such Catholic consent has ever been ascertained, or ever could be ascertained, for any doctrine whatever?

6. Whether, therefore, the famous Vincentian rule *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, ever proved, or could prove, anything except perhaps the existence of a God, and whether the attempt to define the “omnes,” whose assent is to be the test of truth, does not involve us in this difficulty, that if these “all” are all those who “profess and call themselves Christians,” the definition would include Heretics, and if the “all” are those only who are true Catholics, then we have got into the vicious circle, of first defining the Catholic Faith to be that which is assented to by all true Catholics, and then defining all true Catholics to be those who assent to the true Catholic Faith?

7. And, lastly, we might ask whether, even granting the Vincentian Rule to be applicable to questions of Faith, any Church in Christendom ever held it applicable to questions of Ritual, and to be applied to these according to the private judgment of every individual Priest or Deacon in any Church National?

NOTE D.—Those who claim this extraordinary right for each individual Priest in our Church are especially fond of appealing to the XXX. Canon of our Church, in which they maintain that this right is expressly conceded. The passage in the Canon thus appealed to is as follows:—“Nay, so far was it from the purpose of the Church of England to forsake and reject the Churches of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, or any such like Churches, in all things which they held and practised, that, as the Apology of the Church of England confesseth, it doth with reverence retain those ceremonies, which do neither endamage the Church of God, nor offend the minds of sober men; and only depart from them in those particular points, wherein they were fallen both from themselves in their ancient integrity, and from the Apostolical Churches, which were their first founders.”

The meaning of these words seems to me perfectly clear. Our Church, in defending herself for enjoining a ceremony which is also enjoined by the Church of Rome, defines the principle on which her Prayer Book is framed, namely, that it is that of not departing from other Churches “in all things,” but only in those points wherein they are fallen from themselves in their ancient integrity and from the Apostolic Churches, and of retaining all ceremonies that are not either endamaging to the Church or offensive to sober men. The natural inference from these words is, that every ceremony not retained by our Church is in her judgment either of dangerous tendency or offensive to sober men. The Prayer Book is for us the expression, and the only expression, of her mind on this point as regards

every ceremony omitted or retained by her. Wherever in that book she has not departed from other Churches, there we infer, she regards them as not having fallen from their ancient integrity; where she does depart from them, there, we infer, that either she does regard them as having so fallen, or that she regards the omitted ceremony as endamaging to the Church. And the more desirous she shows herself in this Canon, not needlessly to differ from other Churches, the stronger is the inference that where she does differ from them it is for that reason which she declares alone justifies such difference.

To say, therefore, that our Church, in thus justifying her differences from other Churches by declaring that she only differs from them where *she* thinks them corrupt, thereby authorizes every individual Priest in her Communion to adopt the ceremonies of any other Church, wherever *he* thinks them not corrupt, is one of the most astounding inferences ever drawn from human language.

I cannot bring myself seriously to discuss this extraordinary confusion between a statement of the principles embodied in certain laws, and a permission to every individual to set aside those laws whenever they shall seem to him at variance with that principle. But I cannot help asking, if our Church really meant to grant, in her Thirtieth Canon, such a license as this, what was the need for this elaborate defence of her difference from other Churches? Her obvious defence in that case would have been, that whatever difference might arise in any particular case would be none of her making, for that as far as she was concerned, anything that was done in any other Church might be done in the Church of England, each one of her Clergy being perfectly free to compile for himself, from the Service Books of other Churches, his own eclectic and Catholic use, any thing in her Prayer Book to the contrary notwithstanding.

NOTE E.—The amount of Catholic consent, which the Athanasian Creed has received, is stated by my much esteemed friend, the Dean of Norwich, with his usual clearness and candour, to be that of “all Western Christendom and of some of the Eastern Churches,” though these latter receive it, as Waterland tells us, “curtailed of the article of the Procession.” The Dean is far too fair a controversialist not to add, “that this is not indeed the consent of Christendom, such as the Nicene Creed can boast of having received, but it will be admitted that it is next door to it.” “Next door” to consent, however, I am sure the Dean would further admit is not Catholic consent, and is not, therefore, a sufficient warrant for giving to the Athanasian Creed the title of a Creed of the Catholic Church.

NOTE F.—The presumption of demanding the same assent, and with the same penalties for refusing it, for our deductions from an Article of the Faith, as for the Faith itself, is denounced by Jeremy Taylor in words that seem almost prophetic of our present Athanasian controversy. “Whatsoever is added to it” (the Faith) “is either contained in the Article virtually, or it is not. If not, then it is no part of the Faith, and by the laws of Faith there is no obligation passed on any man to believe it; but if it be, then he that believes the Article does virtually believe all that is virtually contained in it: but no man is to be pressed with the consequence drawn from thence; unless the transcript be drawn by the same hand that wrote the original. For we are sure that it came in the simplicity of it from an infallible Spirit; but he that bids me believe his deductions, under pain of damnation, bids me, under pain of damnation, believe that he is an unerring logician; for which, because God has given me no command, and himself can give me no security, if I can defend myself from that man’s pride, God will defend me from damnation. *

NOTE G.—A striking instance of this fallacy, as it appears to me, is to be found in the pamphlet on the Athanasian Creed, by the Dean of Norwich, from which I have already quoted, and from which I now quote again, in the way of argument, because I have no fear of offending, by fair criticism, one whom I am happy to call my friend, and because the fulness and precision with which the Dean states his case make it quite a crucial test of the value of the argument on which he rests it.

The Dean supposes the case of a Clergyman preaching a sermon on the text, “Be not deceived, thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” 1. Cor. vi. 10, and proceeding therefrom “to explain to his congregation what a thief is.” He accordingly describes certain acts of alleged dishonesty, as for instance, “stealing from God,” by not giving a sufficient proportion of means to works of charity and piety; “stealing from men,” in various ways of fraud and dishonesty, and then reminding his congregation that those who are guilty of such thefts could not “inherit the kingdom of God.” This particular application of a general warning of Scripture the Dean, with much ingenuity, insists on as exactly parallel to the teaching of the Church in the Athanasian Creed, in which she first recites the general warning “that Faith in Christ is indispensably necessary,” and then proceeds to “give those particulars of the Universal Faith which he who exercises Faith must believe.”

On this I have to observe, that it is a perfectly valid argument against

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor, vol. x., pp. 469, 70. Ed. Heber, 1823.

those, if there are any such, who deny that it is within the competence of the Church to make any particular application whatsoever of the general warnings in Scripture against unbelief ; but, that it is no argument whatever against those who, admitting the Church's right to make such an application, only question whether in every instance in the Athanasian Creed it has been rightly made. The congregation, whom the Dean supposes to have assembled to criticise the preacher's sermon, would certainly have no right to complain "*of his sending to Hell every Sunday*" every one of them whose case he could fairly bring within the scope of his text, but they might be allowed to question, whether every one of the cases he cited did come within that scope. For instance, had I been one of the imaginary congregation, I should certainly have questioned, whether deficient subscriptions to charities, was really thieving, in the sense in which thieving is denounced in the text or in the Eighth Commandment, inasmuch as it wants that *animus furandi* which, as it seems to me, is of the essence of the sin of theft ; and I should, therefore, have cited this particular part of the sermon as an instance of the danger which lurks in all particular applications of general warnings.

The fallacy in the Dean's argument is this ; that in the case of his imaginary preacher he has framed for him certain categories of offences which the Dean regards as unquestionably legitimate applications of his text. But he has forgotten to observe—first ; that some might question, as I have ventured to do, the legitimacy even of some of those applications, without thereby denying the Divine authority of the general warning itself ; and, secondly ; that, granting that these were all correctly made, it by no means follows that certain other applications of certain other general warnings, are each and all of them made with equal correctness.

NOTE H.—The fallacy which I have thus illustrated is the well known one of the undistributed or ambiguous middle term. When I say :—

Correct Faith is essential to Salvation.

Faith, in all the particulars in the Athanasian Creed, is correct Faith.

Therefore Faith, in all the particulars in the Athanasian Creed, is essential to Salvation.

I use a syllogism precisely parallel to this :

Food is a necessary of life.

Meat is food.

Therefore meat is a necessary of life.

The falseness of the conclusion is apparent in this latter case, and the argu-

ment, in each case, is disposed of by simply adding to the major premiss the necessary word "some." *Some* food is essential to life and *some* degree of correctness of Faith is essential to Salvation. But then it will no more follow from this latter proposition, that Faith in any given dogma, though correct, is essential to Salvation, than it follows from the former that any particular kind of food, though truly food, is essential to life. This can only be proved by an examination into the nature of the proposition in the one case and of the food in the other, and of their relation to the life they respectively sustain.







